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A POLICY ANALYSIS OF THE  
ANGLICAN AND ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS  
IN ENGLAND

B Y

JONATHAN K. RICHARDSON

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A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF  
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11 OCT 2006

## **ABSTRACT**

This is a study of the contemporary Anglican and Catholic school systems in England. It compares the main characteristics of each and seeks to establish how far these are attributable to characteristics of the churches themselves and the extent to which there is convergence between the two school systems as they and their churches respond to contemporary challenges.

This is a complex subject, analysis of which is aided by a model developed from the work of Ball (1994) in the field of education policy studies. Using this model, the broader context in which church schools operate is analysed first, including especially the historical development of church schools, the educational requirements of modern government, the characteristics of the two churches in England as they have adapted to the social changes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, together with the relevant aspects of those changes, particularly the secularisation of society. The relationship between this broad 'context of influence' and the contemporary church school systems is emphasised throughout this study.

Against this background the Anglican and Catholic school systems are analysed and compared at two levels - the strategic level at which 'official' policy is produced and the school level at which it is implemented, with the relationship between the two levels examined in detail. The main features of the two systems are identified and analysed, together with each of the main areas of policy relating to church schools, using a classification system to assist the comparison between them. For example, the issue of pupil admissions is analysed in terms of the stated policies of each church at national and diocesan levels and examined in terms of application at school level in each system. Whilst this is a study of church schools nationally, it is illustrated where appropriate by a case study of Anglican and Catholic schools in the city of Liverpool.

This study has demonstrated clearly that, despite many obvious similarities between the Anglican and Catholic school systems, they do indeed reflect a number of distinctive characteristics of each church. The study also suggests that these characteristics have made it easier for the Anglican system to adapt to the demands of the modern state and the secularisation of society than it has been for the Catholic system, not least because most Anglican schools have traditionally served children from any or no religious background. These differences, it is argued, help to explain the contrasting current approaches of the two churches to the possibilities for expanding

their school systems, made available particularly by the 2002 Education Act. The study also explores the paradox that church schools have experienced a growth in popularity at a time when English society is becoming increasingly secular and institutional religion has experienced a major decline, identifying a number of different reasons for this. Directly related to this, a further significant finding of the study is that the apparent strength of the church school systems, in terms of the numbers and popularity of the schools themselves, whilst this might seem considerable to the lay observer, masks a number of weaknesses which may, in time, have serious consequences if not addressed where possible.

The study has also found there to be clear evidence of convergence between the two school systems, partly as a result of ecumenical developments between the churches themselves and partly because of the ways in which their schools have responded to the impact of secularisation and the growing involvement of government in English education. Whilst this convergence reflects some reduction in the distinctiveness of the Catholic system since the 1970s as documented by, for example, Arthur (1995), this does not imply the absence of significant distinctive characteristics in either contemporary system - indeed, the distinctiveness of the Anglican system is shown to have increased in the decades between the Durham Report (1970) and the Dearing Report (2001), a process analysed in this study.

In addressing these aspects of policy the thesis, in accordance with Ball (1994), highlights the chaotic and often unpredictable nature of policy as it develops, with outcomes that for a variety of reasons often differ from those intended by its originators.

# CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Abstract	i
Contents	iii
Tables/Figures	vii
 PART 1 - BACKGROUND, AIMS AND CONCEPUTAL FRAMEWORK	 1
Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION	2
Chapter 2 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	12
Nature, scope and limitations of the study	12
Methodology and Design	14
 PART 2 - CHURCH SCHOOLS: POLICY PRODUCTION, IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES AT A NATIONAL LEVEL	 35
Chapter 3 - THE CONTEXT OF INFLUENCE FOR CHURCH SCHOOLS	36
The Historical Context - Aims and Development of the Church School Systems	36
The Contemporary Religious Context	44
The Contemporary Political/Educational Context	58

	<u>Page</u>
<b>Chapter 4 - THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT: CONTEMPORARY CHURCH SCHOOL SYSTEMS</b>	<b>71</b>
Organisational features of the Anglican and Catholic school systems	71
The Legal Framework	75
Main Policy Aims and Texts	79
Strategic Partnership with the State	88
Strategic Policy Production within the Churches	99
Signs of convergence at the strategic level	105
<b>Chapter 5 - THE SCHOOLS CONTEXT: POLICY INTERPRETATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOME</b>	<b>109</b>
Distinctiveness and Ethos	110
Religious Education and Collective Worship in The Curriculum of Church Schools	125
Governance	129
Staffing	132
Admission policies and their application	137
Popularity and Performance	140
The effects of change and convergence at a school level	146
Joint Anglican-Catholic Schools	151
Effectiveness in Mission	156

	<u>Page</u>
<b>PART 3 - CHURCH SCHOOLS - A CASE STUDY OF POLICY PRODUCTION, IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES IN THE CITY OF LIVERPOOL</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>CHAPTER 6 - THE LOCAL CONTEXT OF INFLUENCE</b>	<b>165</b>
Introduction	165
The City of Liverpool	166
The Local Religious Context	167
The Local Educational Context	173
<b>CHAPTER 7 - THE LOCAL STRATEGIC CONTEXT</b>	<b>176</b>
Organisational features of Anglican and Catholic School systems in Liverpool	176
Strategic Policy Making Frameworks	179
Policy Texts	184
Strategic Networks	194
<b>CHAPTER 8 - THE LOCAL SCHOOLS CONTEXT: POLICY INTERPRETATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES IN LIVERPOOL CHURCH SCHOOLS</b>	<b>199</b>
Religious Education, Worship and Ethos	200
Staffing	204
Admissions and Pupils	207
Capital Policy Implementation	216
Provision of School Places	218
Joint Catholic/Church of England Schools	223



	<u>Page</u>
PART 4 - CONCLUSIONS	240
CHAPTER 9 - CONCLUSIONS	241
BIBLIOGRAPHY	277

## **TABLES AND FIGURES**

	<u>Page</u>
Figure 1 - Contexts of Policy Making	28
Figure 2 - English Church School Systems: comparative Contexts	33
Table 1 - Distribution of Pupils and Schools in the Maintained Sector in England, January 2002	71
Table 2 - Average school sizes by sector, 2002	73
Table 3 - Popularity measured by pupil numbers	141
Table 4 - Free school meals entitlement for pupils 1999 - 2000	144
Table 5 - Percentage of pupils in Liverpool elementary schools, 1870 - 1930	174
Table 6 - Distribution of Pupils in the Maintained Sector in Liverpool, excluding special schools, January 2004	177
Table 7 - Average school size by sector in Liverpool, January 2004	179
Table 8 - Liverpool Secondary Schools Admissions, 2005	208
Table 9 - Liverpool Pupil Trends, by sector, 1989-2004	209
Table 10 - Indicators of socio-economic characteristics of pupils attending Liverpool schools by sector, 2004	213
Figure 3 - English Church School Systems: Comparative Contexts	246

## **PART 1**

# **BACKGROUND, AIMS AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK** **FOR THE STUDY**



# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this study is to examine the extent to which the distinctive characteristics of the contemporary Church of England and Roman Catholic school systems in England are explained by the traditions and characteristics of the two churches themselves and the extent to which the differences between the two school systems are reducing as the churches adapt to an increasingly secular society and the requirements of the modern state. Whilst the study addresses issues in a broader historical context, it is mainly concerned with the operation of these systems in the period since the 1988 Education Reform Act and especially in the light of the 2002 Education Act.

The 2002 Education Act is unlikely to be remembered by future historians as a 'landmark' piece of legislation, in the mould of either the 1944 Education Act or the 1988 Education Reform Act. Indeed, in a period when significant education legislation is enacted every few years, it may simply come to be regarded as the first such Act of a new century, arguably less significant in overall terms than its predecessor, the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act by which the new Labour Government set the education agenda for its first term in office. In one respect, however, the provisions it contained relating to 'Faith' schools and, perhaps equally important, the debate on such schools which preceded it at the Green Paper and White

Paper stages during 2001 and 2002, are of great significance to the Anglican and Catholic churches.

The 2002 Act confirmed a central place in the state maintained school system of England and Wales for 'Faith' schools, a term first used officially during the consultations preceding the Act, but referring mostly to schools belonging to the mainstream Christian churches. Surprisingly, perhaps, in view of the undeniable decline in membership of the English churches during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and especially in its last two decades, as examined in detail in Chapter 3, the 2002 Act affirmed strongly the 'dual system', which had been formalised in the 1944 Education Act, by endorsing the position of the church school sector in England and Wales and encouraging its expansion.

Parallel to this, and critical to an understanding of the contemporary church school sector, have been the debates within the Anglican and Catholic churches themselves about the nature and purpose of their school systems in a secular society. In the Church of England this led to the appointment in 1998 by the Archbishops' Council of a review group, chaired by Lord Dearing, whose final report, *The Way Ahead: Church of England Schools in the new Millennium* (Dearing, 2001) set an agenda for Anglican schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Nothing comparable to this has been produced by the Catholic Church, but a significant volume of literature, especially during the 1990s, summarised well by Grace (2002), with a number of reports over the same period by the Catholic Bishops' Conference, address the changing

nature of Catholic education in contemporary English society. From both churches a clear picture emerges of the importance each attaches to its schools at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

This is hardly surprising. The historical contribution of church schools in the provision of public education in England has been immense, and its legacy is such that even in the apparently secular society of the early 21st Century more than one in four primary aged children attend a church school (DfES, 2002b, Table 23a). At secondary level the proportion is smaller (14.6% of all secondary aged pupils), but nonetheless significant. The vast majority of these pupils attend Church of England or Roman Catholic schools and, although a small number of Methodist and other faith, for example Jewish and Muslim schools also exist, it is the Anglican and Catholic school systems that are the subject of this study.

With so many English children having received at least a part of their education in church schools the influence of the two largest English churches in this area of society clearly remains strong. This is, however, against a background of decline in which active membership of both churches has fallen significantly in recent decades. Given the extent to which England has become a secular society, it is clear that many regard Church of England and Roman Catholic schools simply as 'church schools' with little to distinguish between them other than the churches to which they belong. The ecumenical movement which has brought mainstream churches closer together and all but eliminated sectarianism since the

1960s, makes such an assumption seem reasonable: there *are* many similarities between the Church of England and Roman Catholic school systems, and in some places joint schools have even been established by the two churches, for example St Bede's School, Redhill, and Emmaus School, Liverpool. In general, however, there remain differences between the two systems, in terms of their aims and the ways in which they operate to achieve these. This study will establish the extent to which common ground exists between them and the degree to which they differ, sometimes significantly, from each other - differences which, it will be argued, are explained largely in terms of the traditions and characteristics of both churches and their historical relationships with society, but which it will also be demonstrated are reducing as the churches adapt to the realities of an increasingly plural and secularised society and to the requirements of a state which since the 1980s has become involved as never before in directing the national education system (Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992, and Ball, 1994).

The size and significance of the church school sector in England is in itself a reason for further research in this area, but there are surprising gaps in the body of existing research with, for example, comparatively little having been undertaken on the Church of England system. In particular, very little work has been published comparing the Anglican and Catholic systems, apart from the work of Chadwick and Gladwell (1987) and Chadwick (1994, 1997). Even here, however, the differences tend to be observed rather than explained fully in the context of the characteristic features of the churches

themselves, notwithstanding clear and explicit links made in these works between the mission of each church and the role of its schools. Whilst the relationship between the Catholic Church and its schools is analysed in great depth in a number of recent publications on the Catholic education system, for example Arthur (1995), Grace (2002) and Sullivan (2001), any such analysis is absent from the limited literature on the Church of England. The nature of this study and its findings, therefore, can be shown to make an original contribution to the understanding of its subject. This is especially so with the case study of church schools in Liverpool, in which findings relating to the national situation are analysed at a local level and which would appear to be the only study of these systems in this, or for that matter any other English city, for at least thirty years.

In order to examine this subject the following research questions have been identified:

- 1     *To what extent do the distinctive characteristics of the Church of England and Roman Catholic school systems in England reflect the traditions and characteristics of the two churches?*
  
- 2     *To what extent are the distinctive characteristics of these school systems changing as a consequence of secularisation and other social changes?*



- 3 *How far has the distinctiveness of the two school systems been affected by the requirements placed upon them by the state?*
- 4 *To what extent are the above changes, and other changes to the churches themselves, leading to convergence between the two school systems?*

These questions do, of course, incorporate a number of other questions. In answering the first question, it is necessary also to address questions about the nature of the traditions and characteristics of the Church of England and Roman Catholic Church in England and then to identify the distinctive characteristics of their two school systems. In the same way, the answer to the second research question will require some analysis of the nature of secularisation and other social changes in England during the second half of the Twentieth Century.

The third question requires a full analysis of the relationship between the church school systems and the state at local and national levels, and especially of the extent to which church schools may have become more integrated within the state system as that relationship has changed in the contemporary period. Finally, an answer to question 4 must address also the extent of the changes that have taken place in the two churches themselves and the extent to which there has been convergence between them in the context of Twentieth Century ecumenism.

The nature of any complex policy study, and the scope of this particular subject, make it impossible to answer each of these questions separately in sequence without considerable repetition of information. There is much overlapping of evidence and it is necessary to develop through the research methodology an appropriate framework to analyse such a complex subject at different levels of its operation, before drawing together the many different threads in the conclusion.

Chapter 2 focuses on research methodology and examines the nature, scope and limitation of the study, describing its design and the methodology used. The research questions are addressed in the chapters that follow this, although for reasons already stated it is impossible to answer any question fully in a single chapter. Rather, they are answered from different perspectives throughout the main study.

The context in which church schools operate within the state maintained system in England will be examined in detail in Chapter 3. This will include the present and historical place of each church in English society and, in answer to the first research question, the characteristics that each displays which are relevant to their role in schooling. The origins, aims and extent of this role will also be analysed, as will the wider social and political context which these schools operate.

Having established in Chapter 3 the broad context in which church schools operate, Chapter 4 will examine the main features of the Anglican and

Catholic systems at the national, or in policy terms 'strategic', level. Data concerning the relative size and characteristics of the systems will be analysed, as will the geographical distribution of church schools. This chapter will also focus on the legal framework within which church schools function and the education policy making and administrative structures of each church at national and diocesan levels. The chapter will therefore be primarily concerned with the systems rather than the schools themselves.

The extent to which the characteristics identified at a strategic policy making level, are reflected in the differing characteristics of their individual schools will be analysed in Chapter 5, where differences, especially in Catholic schools, between the stated aims of the system and the practices at school level will be examined. It will be understood that there is, of course, no such thing as a 'typical' Anglican or Catholic school. Nevertheless, there are certain characteristics which it is claimed, distinguish a church school from a community school, which in large part arise from the ways in which such schools work to achieve their stated religious aims. Superficially, to the secular world, these aims will seem very similar in Anglican and Catholic schools, but it will be shown in this chapter that these apparent similarities, in practice, may mask significant differences in the ways in which schools in each system pursue their aims and in the distinguishing characteristics that result. Notwithstanding this, a small number of joint Anglican/Catholic schools have been established in recent years, and this subject will be examined as part of the wider evidence of convergence between the two systems.

Having examined the Anglican and Catholic school systems in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, the conclusions reached there concerning the national picture will be analysed further at a local level in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 through a case study of church schools in the city of Liverpool. In Chapter 6, the wider local context is examined, highlighting issues which affect Liverpool church schools, additional to the factors identified at a national level in Chapter 3. The Church of England and Roman Catholic Church played a major role in the development of public education in the city during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, to the extent that even today about half of its pupils at both primary and secondary level are in Anglican or Catholic schools. The scale of Irish immigration into Liverpool during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century means that the larger stakeholder is the Catholic Church, although the smaller Anglican presence in the city includes 4 of that diocese's 8 secondary schools. In the case of each church, the city is only a part of a much larger diocese, but its history of sectarian division, effectively ended under the leadership of the Anglican Bishop David Sheppard and the Catholic Archbishop Derek Worlock after the mid 1970s in an ecumenical partnership which led to the first of 3 local joint Anglican/Catholic school projects, together with the size of the church school sector in Liverpool, makes that LEA ideal for such a case study. This is especially so on issues of convergence where particular insights are available that are less clear in most other places.

Following this analysis of the local context, the case study will be developed in Chapter 7, where issues concerning the strategic context of the Anglican

and Catholic school systems, previously identified in terms of the national picture, will be examined at the local level, including an examination of the relationships between the two diocesan authorities and the LEA on school organisation and other policy matters. Likewise, the conclusions reached previously concerning the characteristics of the national systems at the school level will be examined further in the local school context in Chapter 8, giving detailed examples of the way in which policy is implemented at the local level. Other significant developments including the three joint Anglican/Catholic school projects in Liverpool will also be examined in Chapter 8, not simply for their ecumenical significance, but because one is the first involvement by either diocese in the City Academy programme.

In the final chapter of this study, the findings of this research in terms of its central aims, will be summarised and applied to issues facing the church school system in the future, especially those raised by the Dearing Report on Anglican schools and the volume of literature on Catholic education produced in recent years.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **Nature, scope and limitation of the study**

This study involves analysis of and enquiry into the Church of England and Roman Catholic school systems within the contemporary state maintained education system in England. For these purposes 'contemporary' is taken to mean the period since the 1988 Education Reform Act. The study does not include church schools in other parts of the United Kingdom, the independent schools sector, schools sponsored by other denominations including the new Christian schools that have developed since 1969, or the role of the churches in higher education: to do so would be beyond the scope of what is already a complex study. For the same reason, it is a policy study of the school systems themselves and the factors that shape them, rather than issues of pedagogy or the educational performance of church schools. Likewise, the study does not address the wider issue of the churches' significant involvement in the development of Religious Education in the community schools sector.

This is, in the widest sense, a 'policy study', insofar as it focuses on one aspect, in an English context, of:

"the process of giving expression to that which is socially, culturally, economically and politically valued in the shaping of educational structures, cultures, and processes ... [and] on the substantive practices that are effected by policy making and implementing groups. It also concerns the exercise of political power and the processes, procedures, language, ideology and values used to legitimise particular policy initiatives". (Byrom, 1998, p. 9).

Whilst primarily a policy study and not in a conventional sense within the field of Comparative Education, this nevertheless exhibits many features of a comparative study. It is clearly one which compares two education systems which, for all their similarities, have each evolved separately in ways that reflects their differing 'cultural' origins. They are systems "which are the outcome of a long series of decisions and indeed habits. These are all more social and governmental than strictly educational. These systems have established local patterns of coherence (or 'meaning')." (King, 1979, p. 33). This study is of a type clearly identifiable in the earlier approaches to this field, of the comparative effect of external changes on both systems which are now "challenged - if not overtaken - by large scale reinterpretations of what is now feasible or desirable" (ibid, p. 33). In terms of the six forms of comparative education identified more recently by Robinsohn (1992, pp. 51-66) it relates clearly to the first two, namely:

- 1 The expansion and reform problematic of educational systems;
- 2 The analysis of trends of development.

The 'quasi-comparative' nature of this subject means that a methodology used in the field of Comparative Education, described by Robinsohn (ibid, pp. 42-43), has been used as the most appropriate available for organising the study as a whole, as explained in the next section. In particular this methodology is well suited to managing the volume of material available for this study, whilst its emphasis on the identification of 'operable variables' provides a clear way in which to order the findings of a complex study for the purpose of comparison.

### Methodology and Design

This is a study in a qualitative paradigm. It is concerned with human activity, analysed in terms of aims, goals, belief systems and actions, with outcomes that cannot be predicted using the purified methods of the natural sciences with their causal explanations. It is a study which aims to understand, in the context of this subject, the purposes and activities of human institutions and the intentions of the people who are actors in this area. The methodology used must therefore involve empathy with the individuals and groups being investigated, recognising their uniqueness and the unique nature of the subject being studied.

As most common in this paradigm, the methods for data collection and analysis will be qualitative, relying upon the use of interpretation of data which is usually textual, to make sense of the subject and categorise elements within it. This 'interpretative tradition' in documentary analysis



"holds the basic assumption that social phenomena are of an essentially different order from natural ones. They are not objective, external and preordained but socially constructed by individuals" (Jupp and Norris, 1993, p. 42). The methodology makes use of repeated observations to establish a basis for generalisations, with the data, including statistical information, being interpreted for its meanings.

As the study has characteristics found in the field of Comparative Education, use is made of the comparative method as a heuristic tool, using largely the six stages identified by Robinsohn (Op. Cit., pp. 42-43), adapted by changing the order of stages 3 and 4 from Robinsohn's model to suit better the demands of this work.

### ***Stage 1- Identification of the subject and initial hypothesis***

This stage involves identification of the idea for the study and the problem or question that it poses. The significance of the topic in English education has been explained in Chapter 1, but it is also of great personal interest to me, having been professionally involved with church schools in Liverpool since 1988. Even before that time, as a teacher and an active member of the Church of England, I had been interested in church schools and the apparent difference between the two churches in the importance that each attached to their schools. I admired the Catholic Church's approach to its schools, which seemed then to be clear in terms of its purpose, practice and confidence, whilst in contrast the Church of England's approach seemed, at best, muddled and, at worst, almost apologetic for a system on which it

placed little value. With hindsight, these views were simplistic, taking no account of the changes that were beginning to affect both systems in the 1970s and early 1980s, although they were in many respects not far off the mark. In 1988 I became an Education Officer with Liverpool LEA, for most of my time there working as Assistant Director of Education and Principal Education Officer responsible for strategic planning. In this role I had particular responsibility for the introduction of Local Management of Schools, school reorganisation, the capital programme for schools and pupil admissions, all areas that involved me in working closely with Anglican and Catholic schools and the diocesan authorities for both churches in the city. In 2001 I became Director of Education for the Church of England Diocese of Liverpool.

This level of involvement with the subject brought clear advantages in undertaking this study, but also potential difficulties which needed to be recognised from the start. Amongst the advantages that my position gave me was a basic level of understanding of both school systems, especially as they operated in Liverpool and related to the wider policy context, locally and nationally. I also had access to a range of documentation that existed to support such a study, especially at the local level. I was also aware of the gaps that existed in this documentation. Furthermore, I had access to headteachers, governors, senior clergy and officers in both dioceses and the local educational authority to support my original intention of interviewing a cross section of these as part of the study.

On the other hand, it was clear that I needed to be aware of and address properly my own subjectivity in undertaking such a study. My Anglicanism and my professional involvement within the Church of England system, locally and nationally, since 2001 presented the danger of assuming knowledge of it without properly testing this against the available sources. It also required me to be aware of the need to balance the Anglican side of the study very carefully against the Catholic side of it, which I knew less well.

Initial consideration of the, as yet unstructured, material was concentrated on a range of original sources relating to church schools in Liverpool, mainly LEA, diocesan and schools' documentation and statistics, and key texts relating to the national picture, including books, articles and legislation, regulations and statistics. At this stage the intention was to develop a hypothesis on the national church school systems which would be tested largely through a local study, albeit one set explicitly in a wider national and historical context. The question posed by the initial analysis of the situation was how to identify the similarities and differences between the Anglican and Catholic school systems in terms of the characteristics of the systems which appeared to reflect the characteristics of the churches themselves.

This question led to the formulation of a hypothesis, subsequently modified but initially stating that: *Superficially the Church of England and the Roman Catholic maintained school systems in England are very similar but*

*these apparent similarities mask significant differences that may be explained in the context of the traditions and characteristics of the two churches and the historical place of schools within the mission of each.* At this stage, the extent to which the two systems were converging and the full reasons for this were not apparent: it was clear that there was some convergence, as exemplified by the small number of joint Anglican/Catholic schools emerging by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, but these, it seemed, could be explained by improving ecumenical relations between the churches and perhaps in some cases, expediency.

### ***Stage 2 - Identification of Relevant Factors and Data Collection***

On the basis of this hypothesis a number of relevant factors were identified as central to this study, in this second stage of Robinsohn's methodology.

These were:

- 1 Timescale of the study's main focus, i.e. since 1988;
- 2 Main characteristics of the two churches;
- 3 The historic role of schools within the mission of the churches;
- 4 The main features of the contemporary Anglican and Catholic school systems, including their aims;
- 5 The political and social context in which the systems operate;
- 6 The educational context in which the systems operate;;
- 7 The relevant policy texts and their effects;

- 8 The operation of the two systems at national, diocesan/LEA and school levels and the tensions between them;
- 9 Evidence of convergence between the two systems, and joint Anglican/Catholic schools;
- 10 Evidence of other policy outcomes for these systems.
- 11 Evidence of these factors at a local level to sustain a case study.

In addition to identifying the relevant factors for this study, this stage in applying Robinsohn's methodology also involved gathering the necessary data. This largely involved using universities' libraries in Liverpool and Durham and public libraries in Merseyside, referring to relevant books, journals and reports, using national bibliographies and bibliographies contained in the key and most recent texts on the subject to identify other relevant sources. Working in the education departments of a local authority and diocese gave me easy access to all the relevant DfES, LEA and churches' data and I have, since 1999, collected a large number of relevant articles from the education, church and national press. I also used the internet to search for additional material, and obtained some information from video recordings. Whilst the bulk of this data was collected between 1999 and 2003, before beginning to write this thesis, it will be appreciated that the process of data gathering has continued and certain more recently published material has been incorporated subsequently into this study.

Because of my decision not to use interviews to provide data, the sources used in this study are all written texts or documents. Most of the basic

texts are books, often being edited collections of chapters by different authors, some being general texts on education or the churches themselves which contain sections on church schools. Key amongst these have been the works of Chadwick (1994, 1997), which stand alone as contemporary studies of both Anglican and Catholic systems in England, although a number of different themes, often covering both Anglican and Catholic schools, are dealt with in collections edited by Francis and Lankshear (1993) and Eaton, Longmore and Naylor (2000).

A number of major studies of the contemporary Catholic system include those by Arthur (1992, 1993, 1995), McLaughlin, O'Keefe and O'Keefe (1996), Grace (1998, 2002) and Sullivan (2001), for example. In comparison, few academic studies have been published on the Anglican school system, although those by O'Keefe (1986) and Kay, Francis and Watson (2003) are significant, whilst the work of Francis (1986, 1987, 1993a, 1993b, 1995, 2000) is important, not least because it contains significant work on the effectiveness of Anglican schools. Considerable use has also been made of official reports, guidance, regulations and statistics, published by government agencies or the churches at national and local level. The Durham (1970), Waddington (1984) and Dearing (2001) reports produced by the Church of England have been particularly useful. Valuable information has also been provided by reports and articles in the national, local and church press. Information on individual schools for the case study has been provided by the school policies, minutes of meetings, LEA, Ofsted and diocesan reports.

Surprisingly little information of any significance is provided on this subject from the internet. In general terms, the only information obtained from this source has been factual information from the churches' national and diocesan websites, for example, on administrative and support structures for their school systems, and the DfES website with information policy initiatives, guidance and statistics. Most recent policy statements and school inspection reports, are also available on the internet, although these are also published in hard copy.

The volume of material available presented a significant challenge in itself, but many other challenges were also presented:

- 1 Most sources only give a small part of the picture and often exaggerate its importance in the wider framework.
- 2 Care must be taken about the contemporary nature of the sources, as anything written prior to 1988 (and some sources written since then) do not deal with the educational context in which the systems now operate. Likewise few sources written prior to 1998 reflect the current policy of the Church of England towards its schools.
- 3 Many sources, especially press reports, provide purely factual accounts, without any analysis of the subject covered, and can be misleading.
- 4 Some sources, such as LEA reports, are written for a particular audience and presuppose an understanding of an issue or context.

- 5 In many sources the problem of bias must be taken into consideration, especially those texts that are written to further a particular agenda or defend a position.
- 6 With regard to academic studies, there is a considerable imbalance between the many writings of the Catholic school system and the comparatively few on the Anglican system, which on occasions makes informed comparison difficult.

This notable difference in the volume of academic studies between the Anglican and Catholic school systems has no clear explanation, but it is tempting to speculate on two possible reasons. Firstly, it may reflect the major changes to which the Catholic system has been subjected since the 1960s and especially since the 1980s, which arguably are significantly greater than those experienced by the Anglican system, therefore warranting more attention. Secondly, it may reflect the greater significance attached to church schools by the Catholic Church in terms of its mission, than has been the case within the Anglican Church for most of the last century. This second point is illustrated at a number of places in this study, most significantly in the references to the debate within the Church of England at the time of the 1970 Durham Report.

### ***Stage 3 - Modification of the hypothesis***

Proceeding from the original hypothesis, extensive reading of the sources led to its modification to take account of the apparent evidence of possible



convergence between the systems at most levels of operation. It had become apparent that the differences between the two systems were not fixed in 1988 or some other point in recent history, but that the relationship between them was changing, slowly but surely moving them together. This was a dynamic rather than a static relationship that reflected not only ecumenical developments but the effects of the churches having to adapt to an increasingly secular society and the growing requirements of the modern state in education. The extent of these changes had not been apparent in the initial stages of the study, even though it was signalled by Francis (2000), when examining the possible ecumenical consequences of the pre-Dearing debate within the Church of England about its schools which:

“... may be seen to move the Anglican view of church schools into closer sympathy with the Roman Catholic view. Moreover, the Roman Catholic Church has increasingly been forced to recognise that its network of church schools is serving three distinct communities: practising Catholics, nominal Catholics and other Christian denominations. A coherent shared strategy between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church could secure a firm Christian presence in education throughout England and Wales into the new millennium” (ibid, p. 118).

It also became apparent that the original intention of making the Anglican and Catholic school systems in Liverpool the main focus of the study in the context of national developments would need to change, moving the emphasis from the local to the national situation, for which a case study would be provided by the situation in Liverpool. It simply would not have been possible within the size limitations of this thesis to analyse adequately the national situation and, at the same time, relegate it to a supporting role

for the main focus of the study as originally planned. At the same time it was decided not to use interviews as an additional source of information for the case study. Whilst these would provide further evidence at the local level, the additional volume of material produced would be impossible to contain within the physical limitations of the study.

#### ***Stage 4 - Identification of operable variables***

Having identified the relevant factors and modified the original hypothesis, the next stage in following the adapted Robinsohn methodology was to identify operable variables to ensure that only comparable elements were compared. These can be classified as:

- 1 Size of the two churches and the effects of secularization on each;
- 2 Structure of the two churches and traditions of authority;
- 3 Mission of the two churches, through their schools;
- 4 Historical development of the two school systems;
- 5 Present features of the two school systems;
- 6 Relationship between each school system and the state;

These variables were seen to be the most significant areas for comparison. However, in order to compare the two systems fully it was recognised that a classification system using number of key terms was needed, in effect to provide the headings under which the systems could be analysed and compared. These terms are:

- 1 Historical context;
- 2 Religious context;
- 3 Political context;
- 4 Educational context;
- 5 Organisational features;
- 6 Policy aims and texts;
- 7 Strategic partnerships;
- 8 Strategic policy production;
- 9 Ethos;
- 10 Religious Education and Worship;
- 11 School governance;
- 12 School staffing;
- 13 Pupil admissions;
- 14 Schools' performance and popularity.

In each case, these variables are used not simply for purposes of comparison between the two school systems in order to identify differences, but also to identify ongoing changes that may establish evidence of convergence between them.

### ***Stage 5 - Issues of Competence***

In any study that is fully within the Comparative Education field this stage is considered important by Robinsohn in determining the student's

'competence' to analyse the comparability of the institutions and processes to be studied with particular regard to the sources of information, taking account of the possible semantic and structural differences between the cultures involved which might make genuine comparison difficult. In this instance, however, the only issue to be addressed is the availability of a sufficient number and variety of sources to allow the comparisons to be made and confirmed through a proper triangulation process. Because the two school systems operate within the same overall education system in the same country, where 'cultural' differences between the two churches do not generally extend to differences in semantics or understanding, the problems that are often evident in Comparative Education do not feature in this case. As stated already, a full range of data sources exist to support this study, covering adequately the national and local elements of it.

#### ***Stage 6 - Development of a Conceptual Framework***

At this final stage the variables or 'functions' which allow for the comparability of the study and link its educational dimensions to the other relevant religious, social, cultural and political dimensions, were organised in a conceptual framework appropriate for the purpose of so complex a study. This is based upon the work of Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) and Ball (1994) but incorporating the classification system identified earlier in Stage 4 of the Robinson (1992) methodology, and the hypothesis tested through triangulation against other sources.

Ball (1994), in looking for ways to address the complexity of policy,

identifies two different conceptualizations of it: policy as text and policy as discourse, whilst stressing that "policy is not one or the other, but both: they are implicit in each other ... policies [are more than] 'things'; policies are also processes and outcomes" (ibid, p. 15): put another way they are "textual interventions into practice" (ibid, p. 18). He points out that 'policy texts', which in the terms of this study may be taken to include policy statements of the churches' mission in education, official reports or legislation, will inevitably mean different things to different readers, are frequently not read firsthand and are "typically the cannibalized products of multiple (but circumscribed) influences and agendas. There is ad hocery, negotiation and serendipity within ... the policy formulation process" (ibid, p. 16).

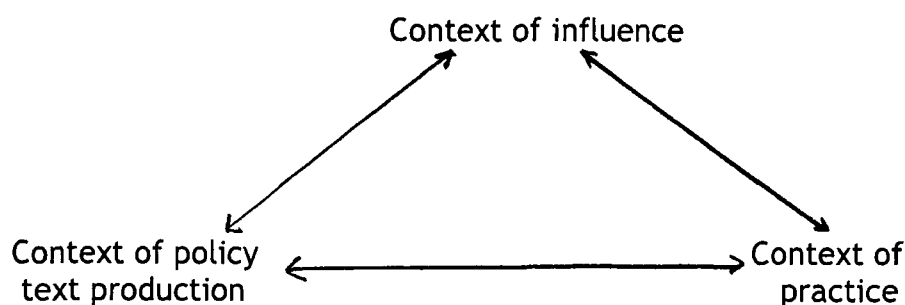
"We need to appreciate the way in which policy ensembles, collections of related policies, exercise power through a production of 'truth' and 'knowledge' as discourses. Discourses are 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak ... discourses are not about objects; they do not identify objects, they constitute them, and in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention" (ibid, p. 21).

The concept of 'policy as discourse' is central to understanding the character of the church school systems. This is exemplified in, for instance, the way that practices (such as the appointment of Christians to senior posts in church schools and the admission of mainly Christian pupils to many such schools), which may derive from specific policy texts, combine within Christian values and ethics (which underpin relationships and codes of

behaviour at a church school) to help create an ethos which will be one of the distinguishing characteristics of such a school.

Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992, pp. 19-23) characterize the policy process in a heuristic model involving three main policy contexts - the contexts of influence, policy text production and practice, illustrated in Figure 1 (ibid, p. 20).

Figure 1 - Contexts of Policy Making



In the *context of influence* policy is usually initiated. This context will normally consist of:

- 1 Construction of policy discourses, often based upon sectional interests and dogmatic ideologies, in this study including the theological rationale for church schools;
- 2 Struggles between interested parties to influence the nature of education;

- 3 Establishment of key policy concepts;
- 4 Consideration in more formal arenas - committees, national bodies, etc., as "sites for the articulation of influence" (ibid, p. 20)

The *context of policy text production* will normally consist of the production of official texts which will often, in addition to formal policy statements such as Acts of Parliament, include statements of guidance or explanation, which must be read in the light of each other. "Policy texts *represent policy*" (ibid, p. 20) and usually seek to present dogma in a way that suggests that the policy is in the public good.

The consequences of policy texts are experienced within the *context of practice*, in which an already complex set of relationships becomes significantly more so as the texts are interpreted in different ways:

"... policy is not simply received and implemented within this area, rather it is subject to interpretation and then 'revealed' ... The simple point is that policy writers cannot control the meaning of their texts. Parts of texts will be rejected, selected out, ignored, deliberately misunderstood, responses may be frivolous, etc. Furthermore, yet again, interpretation is a matter of struggle. Different interpretations will be in context, as they relate to different interests." (ibid, p. 22)

To these policy contexts, Ball (ibid, p. 26) adds a fourth, the *context of outcomes* which (like his fifth *context of political strategy* is concerned with issues of inequalities and social justice relevant to the Critical Social Science Paradigm rather than here) which identifies a relationship between *first order effects* and *second order effects* which can be applied in this

study. First order effects may be characterized as changes in practice or structure, and second order effects as the impact of these changes on the wider system: in this study, for example, a change in policy governing pupil admissions to church schools might have the first order effect of changing admission practice in the schools and the likely second order effect of changing the characteristics of their pupil intake and therefore, in time, of the schools themselves.

The conceptual structure of "policy trajectory studies" (ibid) is an important part of this model, using cross-sectional analysis of policy through the four (or five) contexts of policy making, and is clearly appropriate for the study of a particular policy area such as marketization in education, although it does not lend itself so easily to the study of a whole system, let alone a comparative study of two systems. Nevertheless, these concepts of policy making provide a valuable framework in which, with some modifications, it is possible to use most effectively this volume of data, by further subdividing and categorising the classification system developed in stage 3 of the Robinsohn methodology.

Initially a framework based upon this 'policy trajectory' approach, using the contexts of policy making (Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992, p. 20), modified to include the fourth context of outcomes (Ball, 1994, p. 26) was developed in an attempt to allow for comparison between the two school systems in each context, but it proved impossible to develop into a useable trajectory framework here because of the complexity of the subject. Rather than

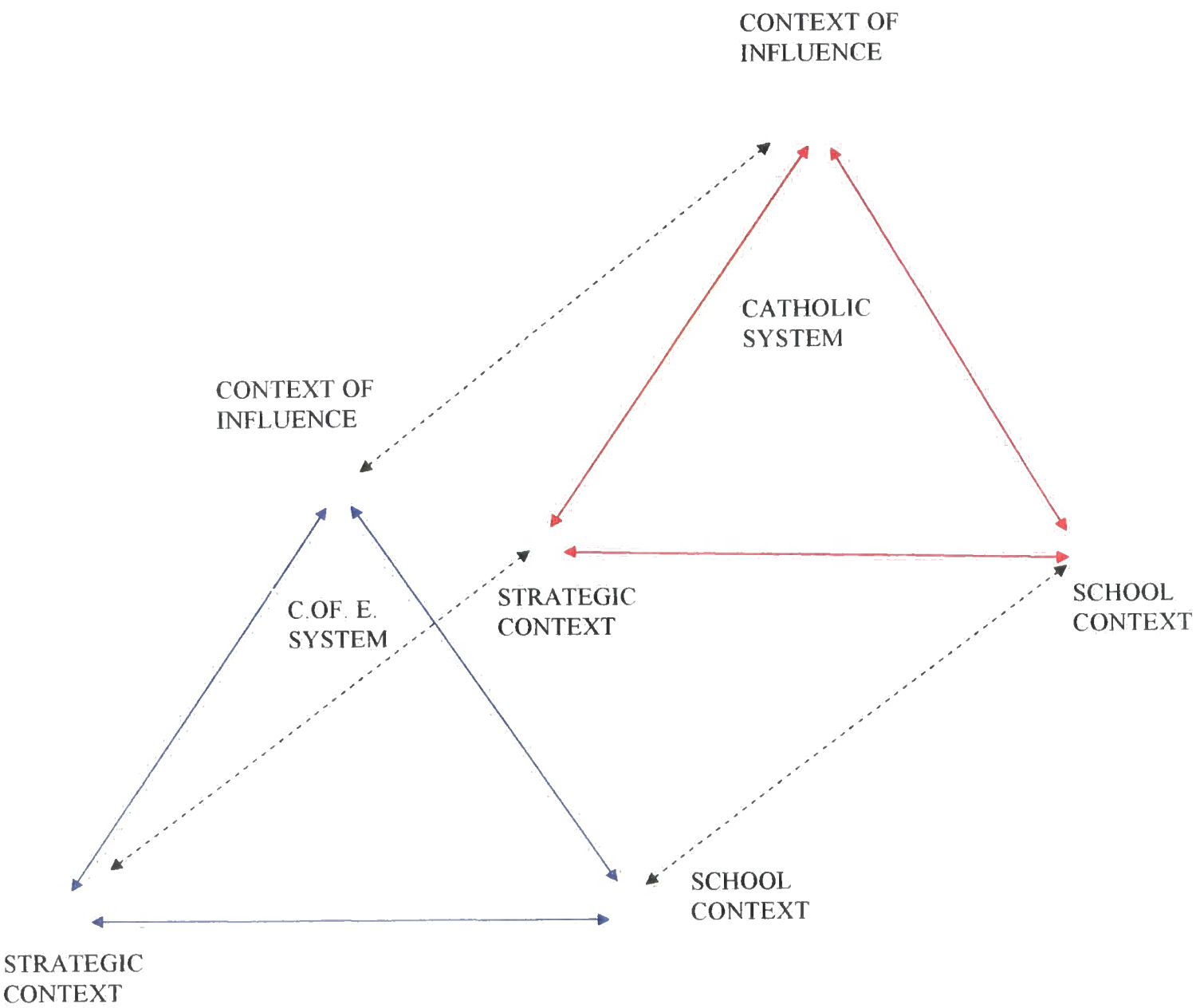


being a study of the effects of a particular policy initiative on a whole educational system, starting from an identifiable point in time, this is a study of systems themselves as they respond to changing circumstances and a variety of policy initiatives from different sources originating at different times. For this reason, therefore, a 'policy trajectory' approach would be inappropriate here. So, for example, in this study the 'context of influence' must include, at a political level, policy texts produced externally to either church by national government and, at a historical level, policy texts produced years earlier by the churches themselves. Likewise, a 'context of practice' would include at individual school level policy texts on, for example, staffing and pupil admissions which, whilst they may reflect national policy texts may also ignore or misunderstand them and may have a greater impact on practice than the national policy texts on these matters.

In place of the framework originally intended, one based upon the macro and micro structural levels of the two systems has been used, operating within what still may reasonably be regarded as a *context of influence* despite the caveats explained above. This will be the focus of Chapter 3, in which the historical, religious, political and educational contexts for church schools will be examined, to which the additional local context will be added for the case study in Chapter 6. At the macro *Strategic Level*, the focus is largely, but not exclusively, on policy aims and the process and structures of policy text production at the national and regional (i.e. diocesan) levels, but with significant attention also given here to the contexts of practice and outcomes as the two systems respond nationally to

externally produced (i.e. government) policy texts and at diocesan level respond to national (i.e. church and government) and local (i.e. LEA) policy texts. This will be the focus of Chapter 4, in which strategic partnerships and organisational features will also be analysed and compared, and will be illustrated in greater depth in Chapter 7 of the case study. At the micro *school level*, the focus is mainly upon the contexts of practice and outcomes, but with some reference to the context of policy text production at school level. This will be analysed in Chapter 5, in which the implementation of Anglican and Catholic policy texts in church schools will be classified under the headings of ethos, Religious Education, school governance, staffing, admissions, school performance and popularity, with some of these areas explored further in Chapter 8 of the case study. The framework shown in Figure 2 is three dimensional to allow for comparison between the Anglican and Catholic systems.

**FIGURE 2 -      ENGLISH CHURCH SCHOOL SYSTEMS:**  
**COMPARATIVE CONTEXTS**



This and the previous chapter have between them made the case for this policy study of the contemporary Catholic and Church of England school systems in England, analysed the main sources on which it is based and established a conceptual framework within which to undertake it. In the next part of the study an analysis will be made of these systems as they operate at a national level, beginning in Chapter 3 by focusing on the 'context of influence' in which both systems exist and with which they must interact.

## PART 2

### CHURCH SCHOOLS

#### POLICY PRODUCTION, IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES AT A

#### NATIONAL LEVEL

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE CONTEXT OF INFLUENCE FOR CHURCH SCHOOLS**

The purpose of this chapter is to establish and explain those factors which, in terms of the analytical model used, constitute the 'context of influence' for church schools. These are the factors which, whilst they may not be understood as a part of the contemporary church school systems, have a direct influence on them and are an essential part of any policy analysis of the subject. Whilst for descriptive purposes, the chapter is split into three sections dealing with the historical context, contemporary religious context and contemporary state context, there is considerable overlap between them and it is important to stress that a fine balance exists between each. The aim of the chapter is to identify the context in which church schools operate, not the way in which they respond to that context - how the Anglican and Catholic systems actually operate within this context will be the subject of subsequent chapters.

#### **The Historical Context -Aims and Development of the Church School**

##### **Systems**

Prior to 1800 the English Church played the major role in the provision of

such schooling as existed, but the real origins of the present Anglican and Roman Catholic systems are to be found in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Indeed, Roman Catholics were forbidden to teach in English schools prior to legislation in 1778 and 1779, whilst the Anglican contribution was limited before then, as was the total provision of schooling. The development of a universal school system in England was marked by the growth of elementary education in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and by legislation through the 1870, 1902 and 1944 education acts, landmarks which formally established and then secured the place of church schools in a national education system which, as will be shown in the next chapter, has not been affected by the 1988 Education Act or subsequent legislation. It is neither possible nor relevant in this section to provide a detailed historical analysis of these developments, but it is necessary to identify certain key features as being the basis of the Anglican and Catholic system as they exist today.

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the development of English education predominantly involved the growth of elementary schools, the majority of which were 'voluntary' church schools, mainly of an Anglican foundation. The 1870 Education Act inaugurated a national elementary school system, with school boards to supervise nondenominational schools, but it also encouraged the churches to provide new voluntary schools to be supported in part by maintenance grants. This 'church system' was enhanced by the 1902 Education Act which made it the responsibility of local authorities to meet the cost of running voluntary schools and of paying their teaching staff, and was extended to include secondary education by the 1944

Education Act. The effect of the 1944 Act and the differing responses of the churches to the new situation will be examined later in this study.

### *The Church of England System*

The position of the Church of England as the 'Established' church was critical to its role in these developments. It has been shown already that it took its national position seriously, even though by the 19<sup>th</sup> Century its support was weak in the most deprived industrial areas. Nevertheless, its contribution through the numbers of Anglican schools that were built in all parts of England during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century was immense, even though its monopoly of provision in many rural areas was strongly opposed by Nonconformists in particular (Murphy, 1968, pp.24-25). In response to the challenge from new 'board' schools between 1870 and 1900 the Church of England doubled the number of children in its schools (ibid), although it ultimately failed to match the growth of nondenominational schools, the percentage of all elementary pupils attending Anglican schools falling from 60.9% in 1876 to 22.1% in 1938 (ibid, p.27), a trend exacerbated by the closure of many village schools as a result of a declining rural population.

Central to the Anglican contribution was the work of the National Society which was established in 1811 and brought together those who, according to Alves (1991, p.11) were the "pioneers" of universal education. Its full title, the 'National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Church of England', encapsulates the aims of Anglicans at the time, "but which phrase in that title was the crucial one? Was it 'the Poor' or was it 'the Principles of the Established Church'?" (ibid, p.11). This



question, modified slightly perhaps by the passage of time, has been at the heart of the debate within the Church of England over its role in schooling since the Society's foundation: is its aim primarily to serve the needs of society, an aim that in 1811 was seen by many to include maintaining social order and cohesion, or is it one of 'mission' in the sense of winning hearts and minds for Christ? The evidence is that both aims have been promoted by Anglican educators (ibid, pp.10-12), which is perhaps not surprising within a 'national' Church, especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century when they might be seen as complementary. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century especially, the Church of England:

"had little doubt that its task was the general education of the whole community, consequent upon a consciousness of its position as 'the Church of the nation'. It had a duty to provide Christian education for the nation's children since the nation itself acknowledged Christian values in political and public life. For the national Church, values of equipping the children of the Church to take their places in the Christian community and serving the nation through the moral formation of its children were hardly distinguishable. Thus for Anglican schools the 'domestic' and the 'general' aims of providing a service for the Church and by the Church for the nation's children could be completely accommodated together." (Chadwick, 1994, pp.9-10).

The values of the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century, however, make it difficult, if not impossible, to accommodate both aims in this way, with "an intrinsic conflict between the ideals of a theology of nurture and those of a theology of service" (Francis, 1993a, p. 59). It is no longer the case that the 'nation's children' are predominantly Christian, although separately each aim is an equally valid form of Christian witness. Chadwick (ibid, pp.10-11) points to the debate on this issue within the Church since the publication of

*The Fourth R* (Durham Report, 1970), a debate illustrated by publications of the National Society (1984), O'Keeffe (1986), Duncan (1990) and Lankshear (1992) amongst others.

The Durham Report, published at a time when "the comprehensive ideal, one school for all, was persuading many to support the abolition of the Church schools" (Hall, 1998, p. 35), whilst not supporting their abolition, proposed the reduction of Church influence through reducing the number of voluntary aided schools. It also advocated changes in admissions arrangements for voluntary aided schools so that the faith background of a child would not be taken into account, whilst "all the points of distinctiveness of the voluntary aided school were to be abandoned save the power for the governors or managers to appoint the staff." (ibid, p.37). These recommendations included HMI Inspections of RE in aided schools, which, by implication, would cease to be denominational. The central findings of the Durham Report, as they related to Anglican schools, were not implemented, but the debate on the 'domestic' and 'general' purposes of these schools has continued, despite the attempt of the Durham Report to resolve the theological tension between the two purposes "by emphasising the general function and eclipsing the domestic function" (Francis, 1993a, p. 59).

Between the publication of the Durham Report and the end of the century, a significant change occurred in the way that the Church of England viewed its school system, which will be examined in detail in the next chapter. A

major contribution to debate during this period, the Waddington Report, 'A Future in Partnership' (Waddington, 1984) was published by the National Society. This was a 'Green Paper' for discussion rather than a policy paper, but one which addressed a number of key issues about the future role of Anglican schools and the nature of the partnership between the churches, local and central government in the light of early developments in education marketisation. Amongst other things, it asked questions about the balance of power between the partners, admissions, variety in school provision (including the possibility of non-Christian religious schools) and the need to establish a coherent strategy for church schools. It rejected exclusive admissions arrangements in favour of providing a distinctive Christian education that was open to all. As such, it can be seen as in some respects moving away from the stance of the Durham Report towards the position established in 2001. It concluded that "within the web of partnership, the Christian Churches must provide a distinctive contribution, one that grows out of theological reflection on the nature and practice of education" and advised "Christians have no need to lose their nerve" (ibid, p. 105). The results of this debate were not seen in policy terms for almost two decades, but they were hugely significant when they came at the end of the century.

Notwithstanding the significance at one level of this debate, it is necessary to avoid overstating its importance within the Church of England. Whilst both aims have always been present in the Anglican school system, it is clear that the aim of serving the wider, non-Anglican, community has always

predominated. The General Synod was advised in its 1998 consideration of school provision that "For most Church of England schools, the commitment derived from the trust deeds of the previous century. These almost universally, referred to the education of the poor of the parish, thus placing the school firmly in the field of Christian service" (Board of Education, 1998, p.17). The same report, whilst noting that some Anglican schools "provide principally for the education of the children of Anglican parents" (ibid, p.17) was accepted in a resolution which affirmed the Synod's central belief "that church schools stand at the centre of the Church's mission to the nation" (ibid, p.4). This remains, after nearly two centuries, the defining feature of the Church of England's school system, and can largely be explained by the Church's role, even in a largely secular society, as the 'Established' national church.

The 1998 General Synod resolution following its consideration of these matters led to the establishment by the Archbishops' Council of a Church Schools Review Group, chaired by Lord Dearing, that in 2001 published its report *The Way Ahead: Church of England Schools in the new Millennium* (Dearing, 2001). A landmark report in many respects, this affirmed strongly the importance of its schools to the Church's mission, although it was notably less clear than the Durham Report in terms of its theological basis, seeing the role of church schools as predominantly in the 'service' or 'general' tradition whilst accepting also the validity of the 'nurture' or 'domestic' function.

### *The Catholic System*

The origins and historic aims of the Catholic school system in England are very differing from those of the Anglican system, although, as has already been noted, both developed within the same time scale after 1800 and within the same legal framework. During the greatest period of growth between 1870 and 1900, the Catholic school population increased fourfold, and continued to grow as a percentage of the total number of pupils, from 5.9% in 1876 to 7.9% in 1938 (Murphy, *op.cit.*, pp.24-27). Whereas the Anglican system represents an important part of that Church's mission to the whole nation, however, the provision of Catholic schools was essentially a 'domestic' provision aimed at ensuring the maintenance of the Catholic Faith amongst Catholic communities, especially those which settled in English industrial cities from Ireland during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Arthur (1995, pp.11-23) traces the development of this system during that century and in particular notes the way in which the Catholic bishops enforced their control over it through the establishment of the Catholic Poor School Committee in 1847. Indeed, the "emphasis on Catholic separation" became particularly evident after 1847 when "some bishops began to deny parents the Sacraments for sending their children to non-Catholic schools" (*ibid* p.12). The Catholic Church gave a high priority to the establishment of Catholic elementary schools, which Arthur notes (*ibid*, pp.15-16) were often constructed prior to a church building and at great cost to the Church and its members.

With no claim to serve the wider community, a clear theology of education

and a distinctive doctrine to teach to Catholic children, Catholic schools became central to the maintenance of the Catholic Faith. A papal encyclical in 1879 insisted that "the Catholic child from the Catholic home must receive education at the hands of Catholic teachers in a Catholic school" (Chadwick, 1994, p.13). In 1929, Pius XI confirmed:

"the prescriptions of canon law which forbid Catholic children on any pretext whatsoever to attend.... schools open indiscriminately to Catholics and non-Catholic alike... (because) the whole of the training and teaching, the whole organisation of the school-teachers, curriculum, school books on all subjects - must be so impregnated with the Christian spirit under the guidance and motherly vigilance of the church that religion comes to provide the foundation and culminating perfection of the whole training" (Hornsby - Smith, 1978, p.7).

Even in the ecumenical climate that has developed since the Second Vatican Council, a new code of canon law in 1983 "insisted that Roman Catholic parents have a duty to send their children to Roman Catholic schools unless that it is impossible, and education must be based on the principles of Catholic doctrines" (Chadwick, 1994, p.13). The second Vatican Council itself, whilst bringing major changes in many aspects of Catholic life, did little to openly change the Church's view on schooling or the theology that underpinned it and its Declaration on Christian Education "came as a disappointment to a number of 'progressive' commentators" (Arthur, 1995, p.49).

### The Contemporary Religious Context

The Christian Churches have played a fundamental part in the shaping of

English society, to the extent that it is still possible, despite the undeniable decline in overt religious practice in the later 20<sup>th</sup> Century, for many still to regard England as a 'Christian country'. The extent to which the country is actually Christian is a matter of much debate, but the fact that it is accepted as such by so many is a key factor in understanding the continuing role and nature of church schools, particularly the Church of England's in the context of its position as the 'Established' national church.

In some respects, the beginning of the decline in the power of the 'English Church' can be traced to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Reformation. With the monarch as its 'Supreme Governor', the Church of England became the state church, more subject than previously to state control with much of its wealth and privilege removed. This 'new' church was not accepted by a hard core of 'recusants' who remained loyal to the Roman Catholic Church, whilst 'puritans' who wished to make the Church of England more Protestant than it was soon gave up the struggle and became 'nonconformists'. The pattern of gradual decline for the Church of England continued, in a period marked in particular by the Industrial Revolution in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century which also saw the emergence of Methodism. The first Census of Religious Worship in 1851 showed that, on the designated Sunday, 7,26,032 people out of a population of 17,927,609 in England and Wales attended any church for worship, of which 3,773,474 attended Church of England services 305,393 attended Roman Catholic services, with the remainder attending Methodist or nonconformist services. The census also showed that the Church of England had become the church of the middle classes in terms of church attendance

(Norman, 1976, p.125).

The statistics of recent decline in church membership are dramatic, however, even if there is often disagreement over their interpretation or accuracy (Furlong, 2000, pp 211-213 and Harden, 2002, for example). Whilst a significant part of the population are baptised Anglicans, the numbers receiving communion in the Church of England on a weekly basis has declined from 920,000 in 1986 to 679,000 in 1998 (Board of Education, 1998, p.21). Likewise, whilst the Catholic population of England and Wales is estimated at 4,174,418, weekly mass attendance had almost halved in 20 years to 1,036,268 in 1997 (Catholic Directory, 1999, p.319). These trends over this period of time are in line with those of the other mainstream churches in England (Davie, 1994, pp 46-47), but they mask a picture that is considerably more complex, for example:

- 1 A far higher proportion of those who claim to be Catholic are active members of their church than the proportion of those who claim to be Anglican (Bates, 2001).
- 2 The decline in active church membership, defined by regular church attendance, is unevenly spread throughout the country, for both Catholics (Davie, 1994, p.58) and Anglicans, with adult attendance in the Anglican Diocese of London actually increasing by 12% between 1989 and 1999 (Jackson, 2002, p.15) and the rate of decline levelling out in many other dioceses (ibid, p.44).



- 3 Likewise, there are considerable differences between individual churches within the same areas, although the majority experiencing growth appear to be the smallest churches which are least able to support financially their diocesan structures (ibid, p.108).
- 4 There is clear evidence that the average age of active church members is significantly older than for the population as a whole, with a very significant decrease in the number of active young people to be found in both churches (ibid, pp 146-148).

It will be shown in later chapters how these factors impact on church schools, especially in terms of the financial ability of the two churches to support their school systems and the diminishing supply of active Christians to staff and lead these schools. More fundamentally, the question must be asked: why do church schools remain so popular in the face of this undeniable decline in organised religion? This issue will also be addressed in subsequent chapters, but the answer must partly lie in the extent to which England may still be seen as 'Christian' country, although this claim is, of course, open to dispute even within the churches, as will be shown. Nevertheless, every survey of opinion on the subject of individuals' beliefs consistently shows more than two thirds of the population claiming to be Christian, a view confirmed in the 2001 Census, in which 71% of the adult population described themselves as Christian (Carvel, 2003, p.14). The nature of such beliefs contain many inconsistencies (see, for example Davie

1994, pp 74-92 and Bates, 2001), but analysis of the independent publication 'Religious Trends' invites the conclusion that:

"It would seem that there is still good feeling abroad about Christianity - see the number of nominal and notional Christians - but fewer people are interested in 'the name without the game', lip service to a church they no longer attend." (Furlong, 2000, p 216).

Nonetheless, 43% of the population still claim to be Anglicans and 11% to be Roman Catholics, according to one recent poll, causing the Anglican Bishop of Southwark, Tom Butler, to comment, "I think it shows that the British are daylight atheists. When things get difficult in their lives they discover that they believe more than they thought they did ..." (Bates, 2001, p.4). None of these points, however, can challenge seriously the view that England had, by the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, become a largely secular society, a process analysed in some detail by Davie (1994) and Norman (2002).

In her book, appropriately subtitled *Believing without Belonging*, Davie (op. cit.) examines the phenomenon of "residual Christianity" or "common religion" which "may well, at one end of the spectrum, have some link to Christian teaching. At the other end it is enormously diverse, ranging through a wide range of distinctly heterodox ideas" (ibid, p.83). She concludes that whilst religious knowledge may have reduced very significantly, religious sensitivity has not. This is developed into the concept of 'vicarious' religion (ibid) in which people expect the Church to be there, especially at times of national crisis, even though they may rarely attend religious services and can also be seen to reflect a culture in which consumer choice has replaced obligation. This concept is related closely to

a model of "affiliation without practising" (Francis, 2000, p. 116) in which many more people claim affiliation to a denomination than attend its churches.

This view of contemporary Britain is, of course, far from universally accepted, even amongst Christians. It has been argued that society's core religious culture has been destroyed, not by a gradual process of secularisation, but by a major and sudden cultural revolution in the 1960s (Brown, 2000). Dr David Hope, shortly before his retirement as Archbishop of York, said that he would be "hard pushed" to describe Britain as a Christian country because of "secularist tendencies and a lessening of commitment to the Church" (Harden, 2004, p. 3).

Whatever the truth of such arguments, the churches can justly claim a tradition of involvement in education stretching back over more than fourteen centuries which it seems logical to maintain, given the central role of education in nurturing and, at a basic level, making known the Christian Faith and the clear ongoing popularity of church schools with parents and politicians alike.

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the Church of England remained weakest in the most disadvantaged urban areas, and strongest in rural and the more affluent suburban areas. Whilst this reflects the traditional middle class social class base of Anglicanism (Pickering, 1998, p.365), it is also explained

by a parochial organisation which disproportionately supported rural communities more than urban ones until very recently. The practice of grouping rural parishes so that several are served by one priest since the 1970s has been aimed at redressing this imbalance. The Church of England has also renewed its efforts in inner city areas during the 1980s and 1990s, signalled in its controversial 1985 report *Faith in the City* but there have been no significant resulting signs of change to what is firmly established as the traditional pattern of Anglican support. Recently published statistics in the 2003 Church of England Year Book (Church of England, 2003) show the percentage of the population on a Church of England electoral roll in 2000 to be more than twice as high in predominantly rural dioceses such as St Edmundsbury and Ipswich (4.43%), Salisbury (5.56%), Carlisle (5.218%) and Hereford (6.57%) than in predominantly urban dioceses such as Birmingham (1.38%), London (1.73%), Liverpool (2.13%), Manchester (2.01%) and Sheffield (1.84%). These characteristics will be shown in the next chapter to have a clear impact on the nature of present day Anglican schools.

In contrast, the development of the Roman Catholic Church in England since the Reformation has been very different. Hornsby Smith (1987, pp.23-4) records an estimated 650,000 successors to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Catholic 'recusants' who had refused to accept the Reformation in England and Wales, these being the first of what he regards as four strands in the emergence of a Catholic community. The second strand was conversion, especially following the restoration of the Hierarchy in 1850 (ibid, p.23). The third strand was Irish immigration, important even before the Irish

Famine in the 1840s, but of major significance after that event: "For more than a century, Irish immigration was one of the most important factors in the Catholic revival. Cardinal Manning, writing in 1890, noted that eight tenths of the Catholic population in England were Irish" (McLaughlin, O'Keefe and O'Keefe, 1996, p.2). A fourth strand is seen as the significant number of Catholics who settled in England, especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, from places such as Poland, Italy, the West Indies and Africa.

The comparative size of these last two groups and the fact that most of them settled in London or the great industrial cities of the North and Midlands, means that, with the exception of Lancashire, Northumberland and Durham, which have fairly well established rural congregations, the Roman Catholic population in England is concentrated in urban areas (Gay, 1971, pp.98-100). English Catholics "on average were slightly younger than the general population and had a tendency to be 'working class' and to vote Labour" (Arthur, 1995, p.90). If the nurture and maintenance of these communities provided the rationale for the Catholic school system, which was created in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, it will be argued that their geographical concentration made the task possible.

In terms of their structures of authority and internal organisation the two churches also display different characteristics that have a direct impact upon the governance of their schools. Whilst it would be incorrect to call the modern Church of England a democratic church it is certainly true that decision making is widely shared between clergy and laity through system of

national, diocesan and deanery synods, and by parochial church councils. Anglican churches have traditionally enjoyed considerable independence from central diocesan control, typified by the freedom of tenure enjoyed by most clergy until very recently. It will be shown in this study that these characteristics are reflected in certain features of Anglican school governance. In contrast, whilst the growth in lay participation in the structures of the Catholic Church since the second Vatican Council has been significant, "this has not been a tradition and any shift in the focus of power away from the clergy remains a formidable task involving many fundamental changes in the organisational life of the church" (Arthur, 1995, p. 147). The defining organisational feature of the Roman Catholic Church remains its hierarchical structure, and the effect of this on the governance of its school system will also be demonstrated in this study.

In terms of doctrine the Church of England can be described as broad and pluralistic. As the 'national' established church its history has been one of seeking as far as possible to accommodate the diversity of religious views found in the population at large, rather than that of a church seeking to enforce a particular doctrinal orthodoxy, as illustrated by Pickering (1988) and Sykes (1987, 1995) amongst others. According to Archbishop Rowan Williams:

"Anglicans have always been cautious about laying too much stress on formulae over and above the classical creeds; and that has proved both a strength and a weakness ... [however] it is not true that there is no distinctive Anglican doctrine. But the discovery of it may require some patience in reading and attending to a number of

historical strands, in order to watch the way in which distinctiveness shows itself” (Williams, 2004, p. 1).

This diversity is also reflected in the character of the international Anglican Communion according to Sykes (1987), based as it is upon legal structures that allow considerable regional variation and disperse authority instead of concentrating it in the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The significance of this pluralism for Anglican schools is that they have never been required to teach a narrow doctrine or exclusive version of Christianity and, as will be shown, have generally been open to children of other faiths and of none. In contrast, the Roman Catholic Church has traditionally had a comparatively clear and distinctive doctrine and a stated mission for its schools to teach that doctrine to Catholic children. As will be demonstrated, in the next chapter, the Catholic school system is an integral part of the Roman Catholic Church in a way that, despite claims to the contrary in, for example, the Dearing Report (2001), is less evident in the Anglican system.

It needs to be recognised, however, that both churches have undergone significant changes in recent decades, experiencing divisions and challenges to their leadership from within, and negative publicity from the secular media that in many eyes has damaged their authority. This has generally been more public in the case of the Church of England, although recently publicised scandals involving members of the clergy have also seriously affected the Catholic Church, not least because of their international

dimension.

The historical diversity within the Church of England has already been noted, but a number of major issues have emerged since the 1960s which have, regardless of their merits, emphasised internal division and given the impression of a church in crisis. In particular, the debate around the ordination of women priests, approved in 1992 but a major issue for two decades previously and still one for many Anglicans, with the more recent debate around the issue of homosexual clergy, have demonstrated apparently deep rifts. As unsettling for many Anglicans has been the issue of liberal theology, not new but very public since the Bishop of Woolwich, John Robinson, published *Honest to God* in 1968 (Furlong, 2000, p. 118) whilst the Bishop of Durham, David Jenkins, achieved great prominence with a similar stance in the 1980s (ibid, p. 330). Liberal theology has been strongly opposed by many within the Church, especially on its increasingly powerful Evangelical wing, and has allowed the tabloid press to characterise 'disbelieving' bishops. To many within the Church of England, however, the most alarming development of the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century has been the open intolerance of some on different wings of Church to those who hold views different to theirs: this intolerance rather than the plurality of views within the Church is seen as a real threat to Anglican unity (Hobson, 2004).

On the other hand, the Church of England has moved towards what is arguably a more effective internal organisation, through the introduction of synodical government in 1970 (Furlong, Op. cit., pp. 176-181) and the



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centralisation of its executive functions in the Archbishops' Council which came into being in 1999 following the 1995 Turnbull Report (ibid, pp. 182-3). At the same time, whilst the long running debate on disestablishing the Church of England continues, it remains the 'Established' national church. The arguments surrounding this are dealt with by Avis (2001), but whatever their merits, the present situation gives a number of advantages to the Church in the area of education, for example a Parliamentary platform on which its bishops can speak, through membership of the House of Lords.

Whilst not 'established' in the way of its Anglican counterpart, the Catholic Church "was by the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century an accepted part of the English religious pluralism" (Norman, 1985, p. 125) and in the 1980s and 1990s, under the leadership of Cardinal Basil Hume, achieved parity with the Church of England in influence on national political life. However, according to Hornsby-Smith (1987) massive changes have occurred within English Catholicism since the Second Vatican Council :

"This can best be interpreted as a process of dissolution of the boundaries which once defended a distinctive Catholic sub-culture from contamination in a basically secular society. It is too simplistic to regard such a process as one of decline. Rather it indicates that far reaching changes have taken place in the relationships between the Church and British society ... These have necessarily entailed radical changes in the nature of Catholic identity." (Hornsby-Smith, 1987, p. 214).

This may also in part reflect the liturgical and other changes that the Second Vatican Council introduced, which "did not conclude a period of doubt and disagreement but, to a very greater extent, inaugurated one"

(Hastings, 1987, p. 530). Under Pope John Paul II, the formal teachings and doctrine of the Catholic Church have remained conservative, but the Catholic community in England has come to display "considerable internal diversity; a diversity discernable with respect to origins, beliefs and practice and increasingly noticeable with each post-war decade that passes" (Davie, 1994, p. 58). According to Professor Stephen Sykes, a prominent Anglican theologian and former Bishop of Ely, this internal diversity is as great within the Catholic Church as within the Church of England, but is less obvious to the outsider and less threatening to internal unity:

"This is a question that goes very deep. Each Church has an internal diversity. I've met Catholics who say that their own internal problems are much worse than Anglican ones .... [however] What I admire about [Roman] Catholics is the self-discipline, the acceptance of the Church's authority, or at least the reluctance to defy it. They might not like what the Pope says much, but its hard to find someone who'll speak against it. There's a kind of inbuilt preference for the unity of the Church - and I wish I saw more of that in Anglicanism." (interview recorded in Hobson, 2004, p. 18).

Whilst the extent of the diversity within the Catholic Church may therefore be masked fairly effectively from those outside it, for whom the doctrine and teachings of the Church are seen to be at one with those proclaimed by a conservative Pope and hierarchy, the significance of the changes that have occurred even at this 'official' level, since the 1960s in particular, cannot be overstated. These have been recorded, not always approvingly, by all contemporary writers on the subject, most recently by O'Collins and Faruggia (2004) who place them in a wider historical context and give a clear impression of convergence between official Catholic teachings and

those of other Christian churches. This has led, in the spirit of openness following the Second Vatican Council, to meaningful dialogue with other churches and the involvement of the Catholic Church in the wider ecumenical movement.

In terms of Anglican-Catholic relations, these changes were demonstrated particularly by the establishment of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, ARCIC, in 1970 for the purpose of serious dialogue on the differences between the churches and to proclaim "penitence for the past, thankfulness for the graces of the present, urgency and resolve for a future in which our common aim would be the restoration of full organic unity" (ARCIC, 1982, p. 1). Three reports preceded a Final Report (*ibid*) which, whilst failing to reach doctrinal agreement on many points, succeeded in establishing some common ground in the controversial areas of ministry and ordination, the nature and exercise of authority in the Church, and especially the doctrine of the Eucharist. Whilst the work of ARCIC did not go as far as some had hoped for, the Vatican's response being delayed until 1991 and not being particularly encouraging, its mere existence would have been unthinkable a generation before. This significantly improved relationship between the two churches was symbolised in the public's mind by meetings between the Pope and Archbishop of Canterbury, especially the first in 1966 between Paul VI and Archbishop Ramsey and that between John Paul II and Archbishop Runcie at Canterbury in 1982. A second ARCIC report (2005) focused on issues relating to the Virgin Mary in particular, the Church as communion, justification, morals and authority, to "show a remarkable

convergence among Roman Catholic and Anglican Theologians in issues that have long been painfully divisive” (Sagovsky, 2005).

It is, however, at the local level where, arguably, the greatest ecumenical developments have occurred between Anglicans and Catholics. These have included the high profile partnership in Liverpool between the Anglican Bishop David Sheppard and the Catholic Archbishop Derek Worlock, but are in most cases local initiatives (Edwards, 2000, p. 266) including, for example, the sharing of church buildings and a small number of joint Anglican/Catholic schools. Whilst the effects of these changes on the school systems of the two churches is most obviously demonstrated by joint Anglican/Catholic schools, they will be shown in the chapters that follow to contribute in other ways to convergence between these systems as the churches themselves move closer together.

### **The Contemporary Political/Educational Context**

#### *The ideology of educational marketization*

It is always difficult in a ‘contemporary’ study to determine where the relevant period of time begins! This is particularly so with regard to the political/educational context for the church schools. In many respects the whole post Second World War educational scene was set by the 1944 Education Act, most of its central provisions, especially concerning church schools, modified by subsequent legislation, remaining as the framework for state maintained education today. The ongoing effect of the 1944 Act on church schools will be examined in Chapter 5, but a powerful argument

exists, accepted here, that the contemporary political/educational period actually began in the 1980s and especially, but not exclusively, with the 1988 Education Reform Act. Whilst the 1944 Act established the legal framework for state maintained schools, the political assumptions underpinning education since 1944, including those which drove the movement for comprehensive education in the 1960s and 70s, were radically altered in the years after the election of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Government in 1979, by the neo-liberal ideology of the education market which came to dominate education policy under successive governments, for which the 1988 Act was a landmark.

The marketisation of public education in England and Wales, introduced by the 1988 Act had its origins in the economic events of the 1970s and early 1980s in the Western world in general. Following the oil crisis of early 1970s, unemployment significantly increased in the developed world, linked to a perception of economic stagnation, made worse by the economic changes following British entry into the European Common Market in 1973. Economic problems were seen to be linked to 'welfarism', over-powerful trade unions, and a lack of social cohesion, which contributed to the defeat of the Callaghan Labour government in 1979.

At the heart of these reforms in England and Wales was the 'New Right' philosophy of the Conservative governments of Margaret Thatcher during the 1980s, which were applied across a range of social policies. Halsey, Lauder, Brown and Stuart Wells (1997, pp 21-22) identify three main aspects of

market policy applied specifically in education, namely: devolution of financial, staffing and policy issues to schools; competition between schools which determines each institution's success; and parental choice between schools.

The origins of this philosophy can be seen particularly in the earlier writings of Hayek, whose basic philosophy was that the operation of public services should be left "to competitive enterprise and rely on appropriate methods of apportioning the funds raised by compulsion in accordance with some expressed preference of the users" (Hayek, 1976, p. 46). This theme was developed in Britain by writers such as Joseph (1976) and Tooley (1994).

The 1988 Education Reform Act (DES, 1988), whilst not the first piece of Conservative market based educational legislation, following as it did the Acts of 1980 and 1986 (DES, 1980, 1986), but it was certainly the most significant in driving forward the agenda of the new right. It was followed by other legislation, notably the 1992 and 1993 Education Acts (DFE, 1992, 1993) and the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act (DfEE, 1998a), which extended the process of market reform and also, paradoxically in view of its declared aim of devolving significant powers to parents and schools, extended the power of central government over education.

It is critically important, however, to understand that the ideology of marketisation led to more than just a complex programme of legislation and significant structural changes to the state maintained school system in

England. It also created a discursive position and in consequence changed radically the understanding that parents and professionals engaged in education had of the school system. By the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the market concepts of choice, accountability and measurable educational standards were embedded fully as a new orthodoxy in the culture of the English educational system.

The structural effects of this legislation were general, insofar as they affected all schools in the English maintained sector, containing little specific reference to church schools other than the provisions of the 1992 Act (DFE, 1992) permitting separate inspection of 'denominational education' in them, as a result of pressure from the Catholic Church and Church of England (Walford, 1995, p. 102).

The central feature of marketisation in England and Wales is parental choice and therefore competition between schools. This in turn implies the need for diversity of school provision in order to make choice meaningful, and the 1988 Education Act legislated for both. Firstly, by linking a school's 'standard' admission number to its physical capacity, it strengthened greatly the provisions of the 1980 and 1986 Education Acts which had, by introducing 'Open Enrolment', prevented LEAs from restricting admissions to a school at which places were available, either through artificially low admission numbers or catchment areas. It gave parents the right to express a preference for their children to any state funded school with places available, even one in a different LEA area to the parental home, and in



doing so reduced the power of LEAs, which were a key part of the educational establishment targeted by the Conservative Government.

Having established parental choice, the 1988 Act provided for the establishment of alternative schools to those operated by LEAs: grant maintained or 'GM' schools were allowed to 'opt-out' of LEAs, following a ballot of parents triggered in each case by a decision of the school's governing body, and were directly funded by central government with considerable autonomy, including control of admission arrangements. City technology colleges, on the other hand, were to be new institutions established with the financial support of central government and local businesses, with the latter to play a central role in CTC trusts which were to govern these schools. The unsuccessful CTC initiative was eventually followed by the 1996 programme for 'Specialist Schools' which, although not related directly was also intended to increase diversity of choice for parents and to introduce significant elements of private sponsorship to state schools. Alongside these developments, the growth of 'New Christian' schools, mostly linked to independent charismatic churches and to the pressure groups the Christian Schools Campaign, has been well documented by Walford (1994, 1995). The Christian Schools Campaign, in alliance with others, although not generally the main English churches, succeeded in having sections of the 1993 Education Act (DFE, 1993) permit various sponsor groups to apply to the Secretary of State to establish new types of grant maintained schools, although few 'New Christian' schools actually applied to receive state funding in this way (Walford, 1995, p. 117). The

same group also succeeded in its campaign to ensure that Ofsted, under the 1992 Education Act (DFE 1992), would inspect the spiritual and moral values of each school (Walford, 1995, pp 77-88).

These schemes were not, however, taken up to the extent that their advocates had intended, for example, only in approximately 1,000 schools out of 24,000 did parents vote to 'opt-out' of LEAs by choosing GM status. The movement between schools, at least in the early years of Open Enrolment, has been calculated at only 5-10 per cent of parents (Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992, p. 29), and there is clear evidence in England in that "the strategic processes of choice systematically disadvantage working class families" (Ball, 1994, p. 117).

At the same time, the development of Local Management of Schools since 1988, implemented by LEAs and including the delegation to all schools of formula derived budgets with control over personnel, property and financial management, has become embedded in the education system. In this respect decentralisation has increased under the Labour Government after 1997 with the implementation of 'Fair Funding' (DfEE, 1998a). In the same way the National Curriculum with the associated testing and OFSTED inspection regimes, established in 1988 and 1992 respectively, are embedded in the education system and provide what Morrison (1994, pp 417-418) describes as a key feature of the education market by the provision of 'comparable' information on which parental choice can be based.

Far from undoing the work of its predecessors, the 1997 Labour Government has enhanced many aspects of marketisation. Its 'Fair Funding' programme, the policies of Education Action Zones, Private Finance Initiatives (PFI) and City Academies have all led to the first serious involvement of the private sector in state education, with some 'failing' schools and LEAs being handed over to private companies to manage (Slater, 2000, p. 21). The future of marketisation in education in the medium term therefore seems assured, even though opposition to certain aspects of it, for example PFI, has remained strong in groups such as the trade unions. The extent to which the churches have come to terms with both an ideology and a practice which to many, although not all, Christians seems to be fundamentally at odds with Christian teachings and values, (Chadwick, 1997 and Grace, 2002), will be examined in the next chapter. It is, however, undeniable that the key market concepts of parental choice, schools' accountability and measurable educational standards are now ingrained in the educational culture of England, affecting church schools as much as any others.

### ***The 2002 Education Act***

Whilst the impact of legislation in the 1980s and 1990s is highly relevant to church schools as it created a new ideological context in which they operate, its influence is general insofar as it affects all maintained schools, secular and denominational on an equal basis. A further piece of legislation, more specific in its effects on church schools must also be

considered for an understanding of the contemporary political/educational context. The 2002 Education Act (DfES, 2002 a) contained two significant provisions relating specifically to church schools:

- 1 To allow religious groups to make proposals for secondary schools where they are considered necessary, with the final decision to be made by the Secretary of State rather than local politicians.
- 2 Giving Church of England diocesan boards of education the power to advise schools on their admission policies, with the requirement that they have regard to that advice; and perhaps more significantly making it unlawful for a church school to deny admission to pupils not of that denomination if it has unfilled places, a proviso mainly affecting Catholic schools.

In other respects, the fears that the Act would allow voluntary controlled schools to have no church appointed 'foundation' governors or that schools could "innovate RE or collective worship out of existence" (Hall, 2002, p 9) proved groundless when related statutory guidance was published, whilst the provision allowing the DfES to set up companies led quickly to it establishing a joint venture company with the Church of England as a vehicle for rebuilding Anglican schools through the private finance initiative (ibid).

It was, however, the national debate that preceded the Act and the

Government's response to it which was perhaps more significant than the Act itself for church schools. The debate centred on the role of 'Faith Schools' in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and the proposed increase in their number. As seen already, the 2001 Dearing Report had highlighted the perceived need within the Church of England to correct the imbalance in numbers between Anglican primary and secondary schools by establishing 100 new secondary schools, and even before the publication of this report the Education Secretary, David Blunkett, had signalled his support for such expansion (Holness, 2000a, p. 3). This led to the inclusion of proposals to increase the number of 'Faith' schools in the 2001 Green Paper, *Building on Success* (DfES, 2001). This also proposed a reduction in the churches' contribution to capital costs for voluntary aided schools from 15% to 10% (introduced in April 2002) and gave faith groups the opportunity to manage and run schools in difficulty.

These proposals aroused considerable opposition in the 18 months that followed. Predictably, Keith Porteous, General Secretary of the National Secular Society, argued that "proselytisation, the specific purpose of religious schools, is not a proper use for public money. Our education system should not become a vehicle for the revival of the ailing CofE" (Dean, 2001, p. 6). Professor Richard Dawkins warned that no sane person would advocate setting up "sectarian" schools which "can be deeply damaging and even lethally divisive" (ibid, p. 3), whilst Anthony Grayling, reader in philosophy at Birbeck College, London, argued that "given the great harm that religions do ... in the way of conflict, war, persecution and

oppression and preventing the growth of science and freedom of thought, I object profoundly to my taxes being used to this end” (ibid). Nor was the opposition entirely from outside the churches: the Revd David Jennings, Rector of Burbage argued “I am not sure we need church schools in the society we live in at the moment. Churches run the risk in a multi-cultural and predominantly secular society of establishing something that is not entirely real and, at worst, quite divisive” (ibid, p. 3).

Richard Dawkins in particular continued to lead the opposition in the press in the period that followed, in a debate that increasingly centred on the alleged divisiveness of church schools, particularly after the 2001 Cattle Report on the Oldham, Bradford and Burnley riots of that year appeared to place some blame on church schools for racially segregating children, although the report in fact stated that “the increase in mono-cultural schools was not in any way confined to faith based schools” (Holness, 2001a, p. 2). The Cattle Report did, however, recommend that 25 per cent of faith schools’ intake should be of children from other beliefs, a proposal taken up in Parliament by former Health Secretary Frank Dobson with the support of nearly 50 Labour backbench MPs and some Liberal Democrat MPs (Perkins, 2002, p. 9). The rebellion was heavily defeated, as was the subsequent attempt to amend the Bill in the House of Lords (Holness, 2002b, p. 4).

The churches had consistently argued against what they saw as an inflexible and unnecessary restriction, and that their schools were not divisive in the

way claimed. Canon John Hall, the Church of England's Chief Education Officer, pointing out that the overwhelming majority of Anglican schools in practice serve their local communities, regardless of pupils' faith background (Holness, 2001, op.cit.). Oona Stannard, Director of the Catholic Education Service stated that "Ofsted data clearly shows that the social make-up of our schools mirrors that of the wider community and where the catchment area is racially mixed so are our schools" (McKean, 2001, p. 1). The Government agreed, Education Secretary, Estelle Morris telling the General Synod of the Church of England "Are we to be the first generation to deny parents the right to choose schools that reflect their beliefs and values? I don't want to go down that road: it is not the right way forward" (Holness, 2001a, p.1). With the provisions in the 2002 Bill concerning admissions to church schools, which aimed at making them more inclusive, accepted by both churches at a national level, it became law with the provisions concerning the expansion of the church school sector intact.

The 2002 Education Act and the events surrounding it demonstrate clearly the level of political support for church schools at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. There are undoubtedly a variety of reasons for this, not least the personal commitment of a Christian Prime Minister, Tony Blair, whose children attend church schools. The perceived academic success of such schools, however, at a time when the raising of education standards is at the top of the Government's education agenda, and their distinctiveness at a time when successive governments have advocated 'choice and diversity' in schooling are clearly more powerful reasons for this. The popularity of

church schools with a population that, as has been shown, claims in a majority of cases to be Christian may also help explain this. A MORI poll conducted by the Times Education Supplement at the height of the 2001 debate on faith schools showed that a majority of adults questioned were either supportive (35%) or indifferent (38%) to the existing church schools, although 43% opposed the establishment of new faith schools, perhaps because these were described as including Muslim and Sikh schools only a month after the '9/11' attacks on the USA and following the summer riots in the North of England (Passmore and Barnard, 2001, pp. 1 and 6).

Perhaps, also, the record of church schools in playing a full part in public education since 1944, supporting the major educational initiatives of successive governments, at least to the same extent as secular schools, for example in comprehensivisation in the 1960s and 70s, the Specialist Schools programmes from the 1990s onwards, and the more recent City Academies programme, which will be examined in detail in the next chapter, makes that sector a 'reliable' partner rather than a potential threat to government. Whatever the reasons, the political/educational context in which church schools operate is one in which they are highly regarded and therefore supported strongly by government - as David Blunkett famously put in when he was Education Secretary, he wanted "to bottle the secret of their success" (Dean, 2001, op. cit).

It is in this context that church schools operate today. The extent of the contemporary systems, the main features of them and the way in which



they function in this context will be explored in the next chapter. This will focus on the systems as they operate at the strategic policy making level and how, in essence, they interact with and are shaped by the changing religious, social, political and educational aspects of contemporary English society.

# CHAPTER 4

## THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT -

### CONTEMPORARY CHURCH SCHOOL SYSTEMS

#### Organisational features of the Anglican and Catholic school systems

*Size and statistical features of the system*

Table 1 - Distribution of Pupils and Schools in the Maintained Sector in England, January 2002

<u>Category</u>	<u>Primary Schools</u>	<u>Primary Pupils</u>	<u>Secondary Schools</u>	<u>Secondary Pupils</u>
<b><u>Church of England</u></b>				
Voluntary Aided	1,916	349,860	119	101,937
Voluntary Controlled	2,551	412,015	64	47,385
Foundation	38	8,685	9	7,096
<b>Total C of E</b>	<b>4,505</b>	<b>770,560</b> (18.2%)	<b>192</b>	<b>156,418</b> (4.92%)
<b><u>Roman Catholic</u></b>				
Voluntary Aided	1,733	402,770	356	314,003
Voluntary Controlled	0	0	0	0
Foundation	0	0	1	1,337
<b>Total RC</b>	<b>1,733</b>	<b>402,770</b> (9.55%)	<b>357</b>	<b>315,340</b> (9.66%)
<b>All Other Schools</b>	<b>11,747</b>	<b>3,040,862</b> (72.25%)	<b>2,908</b>	<b>2,792,328</b> (85.42%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17,985</b>	<b>4,214,192</b>	<b>3,457</b>	<b>3,264,086</b>

Table 1 is drawn from the most recent published statistics relating to schools and pupils (DfES, 2002b, Tables 23a and b) and shows the relationship between the Anglican and Catholic systems and their position within the total state maintained school system in England. A number of features of the current church provision can be identified from these statistics:

- The comparative size of the Anglican primary system compared with the Catholic primary system, which can be explained by the origins of most church primary schools as pre 1944 elementary schools and illustrates the historical strength of the Church of England system.
- The reversal of this situation in the secondary phase, illustrating the commitment of the Catholic Church to provide schools for most Catholic children of all ages. This contrasts with Anglican secondary provision which often, although to a lesser extent than in primary schools, as will be shown in the next chapter, reflects its 'general' as opposed to 'domestic' nature and which certainly does not aim to provide for all Anglican children.
- The relative importance within each church's system given to schools with voluntary aided, voluntary controlled and foundation status, the significance of which will be explained in the next section.

- The overall size of the Anglican and Catholic systems in relation to total maintained school provision, to which reference was made in the introduction to this study. The resulting financial implications for the churches in relation to their contribution of 10% of all capital costs for 'aided' schools will, for example, involves them in raising £21.35 million in 1999/00 alone (DfEE, 1999), and which is placing an increasing burden on the Catholic Church in particular which relies more heavily on parish giving to support Catholic schools (Arthur, 1995, p.90).

#### *Size and distribution of church schools*

Information on the average size of schools within the different systems can also be obtained from Table 1 and is summarised in Table 2. The average size of Catholic schools is only a little below the national average size

**Table 2 - Average school sizes by sector, 2002 (pupil numbers)**

	PRIMARY	SECONDARY
Church of England	171	814
Roman Catholic	232	883
All other schools	259	960
National average	234	944

for secondary schools, and is the same as the national average at primary level. For Anglican schools, however, the difference is significant in both phases. In the case of each system these characteristics are in part attributable to the geographical distribution of schools. In particular, the average size of Anglican schools reflects the significant number of small Anglican rural schools in both phases, whilst Catholic schools which are disproportionately located in urban areas, where the closer proximity of pupil's homes and schools encourages the trend to larger schools in the 'county' sector, are able to restrict admissions largely to Catholic children without generally creating small schools. These characteristics of Anglican and Catholic schools clearly arise from the link between church school provision and the areas of comparative strength for each church - the main urban conurbations for the Roman Catholic Church and suburban and especially rural areas for the Church of England, analysed in detail by Gay and Greenough (2000). Further analysis of DfES statistics (DfES, 2002, Tables 22a and b) illustrates the link between the geographical distribution of church schools and the traditional areas of Anglican and Catholic strength which has already been explained in the last chapter in terms of the historical development of both churches during the last two centuries.

- 14.2% of all Catholic primary schools and 17.8% of Catholic secondary schools are located in the 'core' cities of Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds, and inner London and the conurbations surrounding them, compared with only 5.4% of Anglican primary schools and 12.6% of Anglican secondary schools.

- 46% of Catholic primary schools and 50.3% of Catholic secondary schools are in these cities and the conurbation's surrounding them, but only 18% of Anglican primary schools and 29% of Anglican secondary schools. This compares with 30% of all primary schools and 31% of all secondary schools which are located in these areas.
- In contrast, analysis of school provision in areas of the Church of England's strongest support, rural Cumbria, Hereford and Worcester, Norfolk, North Yorkshire, Wiltshire, Dorset and Suffolk shows that 42.9% of all primary schools and 11.3% of all secondary schools in those counties are Anglican, compared with only 5% of schools being Catholic in each sector. In Dorset 55% of primary schools are Anglican and in Wiltshire 69.5% are Anglican!

### The Legal Framework

If the structural characteristics of the church school systems owe much to their historical development and to the history of the churches themselves, as described in the previous chapter, so too does the legal framework in which they operate. The significance of the 1944 Education Act, as a 'landmark' piece of education legislation of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century which brought free secondary education for all, has already been noted, as have the Anglican and Catholic responses to that central aspect of it. The 1944 Act also established the framework in which the English school system has

operated largely unchanged until the present day, with its three main categories of 'county', 'voluntary aided' and 'voluntary controlled' schools, the last two of which include almost all Anglican and Catholic schools. Indeed, the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act (DfEE 1998a) maintains these two categories of voluntary school almost unchanged, the significance of that legislation for church schools being its assumption that 'grant maintained' church schools would automatically revert to one of the two 1944 categories (ibid, Sections 20-22), of which more will be written later. The significance of these two categories and Anglican and Catholic attitudes towards them can only be fully understood in the context of their traditions and attitudes in education generally.

Superficially there may seem little difference between voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools, as both are part of the 'voluntary' system of church schools established in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. They are however, very different. Both types of school owned by church trustees and maintained by local education authorities (LEAs), but an 'aided' school is controlled by the trustees who are aided by the DfEE in maintaining their buildings. A 'controlled' school is fully controlled by the LEA in the same way as nondenominational 'county' (or 'community' after 1999) schools are. Staff at 'aided' schools are legally employed by their governing bodies, although paid by the LEA, whereas at 'controlled' schools they are employed by the LEA. In an 'aided' school an absolute majority of governors is appointed by the trustees, whilst in a 'controlled' school these 'foundation' governors are in a minority. Critically, the Religious Education Syllabus in an 'aided'

school is determined by the governors in accordance with the doctrines of their church, whilst a 'controlled' school must follow the LEA 'Agreed Syllabus' for RE. A school's admissions policy is determined by the governors of an 'aided' school and the LEA for a 'controlled' school.

With these important distinctions in mind, it is not surprising that the Roman Catholic Church, which saw its schools as essential to the task of ensuring that all Catholic children were 'properly' educated in the Catholic religion (Arthur, 1995, p.38), considered it necessary to maintain schools in which its trustees employed their own staff, controlled their own pupil admissions, and taught a Catholic RE syllabus. Indeed, whilst Anglicans at the time largely accepted the 1944 Act as realistic, and perhaps even generous, the initial reaction of Catholics had been to oppose it, rejecting completely the option of controlled status as representing, in the view of the Tablet, "the idea of a non-institutional Christianity" (Norman, 1985, p. 123). Instead, the Catholic Church embarked upon a development programme for its schools, including many new secondary schools, which in 1949 was estimated to cost up to £60 million, to be paid by its predominantly working class members, and which was:

"one of the most impressive of Catholic achievements: that the parents' associations established to co-ordinate the campaign, and the parish priests in the localities, were successful in extending Catholic education in the years after the war" (ibid, p. 123)

None of the 1,733 Roman Catholic primary schools were 'controlled' in 2002, and none of its 357 secondary schools had that status, all but one being 'aided' with one foundation school only (See Table 1). This has been



at no little cost to the Roman Catholic Church, whose governing bodies must pay 10% of all capital building and repair costs, as noted earlier. Prior to 2002 this contribution was 15% and before 1959 governors were required to pay 50% of capital costs, a burden which Arthur (1994, pp.28-34) records as stretching some dioceses to their financial limits.

The Church of England, in contrast, whilst maintaining as many 'aided' schools as practical after 1944, given the cost of doing so, does not regard 'controlled' status as incompatible with its aim of serving the wider community, the majority of who are not practising Anglicans. Indeed, the 1944 Act created 'controlled' school status as a compromise that allowed the Church of England to retain many schools that it could no longer afford to pay for, but which the state could not afford to buy from it (Murphy, 1971 pp.110-111). It is possible to speculate that in 1944 the Church of England was less concerned than the Catholic Church about the prospect of loss of control over many of its schools because it was the national church at a time when a majority of the population were at least nominally Anglican, and, when the context of RE syllabuses in 'controlled' and 'county' schools alike was acceptable to a church whose own doctrine was itself broad. The fact that the situation is now very different has helped fuel the debate about the role of Anglican schools within the Church of England since the 1970 Durham Report, to which reference has already been made. In 2002, out of a total of 4,505 Anglican primary schools, 2,551 were 'controlled' and 38 'foundation', whilst 64 of the 192 Anglican secondary schools were 'controlled' and 9 'foundation' the remainder being

'aided' (DfES, 2002b, Tables 23a and b).

### **Main Policy Aims and Texts**

In the previous chapter the historical rationale for Anglican and Catholic schools was examined, but to what extent have the aims of the churches, as expressed in their underpinning policy texts - the official reports and statements of church leaders - changed to reflect the contemporary situation in which their schools operate? In particular, how have the Anglican and Catholic school systems responded to the realities of secularisation and to what extent do they reflect in doing so the characteristics of the churches themselves as they adapt to a rapidly changing society?

At one level the theological rationale for the two systems remains as it always was. At its heart, the vision for Christian education is the same for both Churches, which see the process of education as being, in the previous Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey's words:

"... about forming people who have the moral strength and spiritual depth to hold to a course and weather ups and downs. It is about forming people who know that economic competition is not more important than family life and love of neighbour, and that technical innovation is not more important than reverence for the beauty of creation. It is about forming people who ... are not reduced to inarticulate embarrassment by the great questions of life and death, meaning and truth" (Carey, 1998, pp. 9-10)

His successor, Archbishop Rowan Williams, told Anglican secondary headteachers at their 2003 national conference that church schools needed

to go further than simply seeking to develop individual people

"... in taking for granted that the culture that needs developing has to include what many would call the single most definitive factor in all human cultural history up to and even including modernity; the beliefs and practices that express relation to something more than the individual and more than the sum of contemporary individual experience, relation to what is holy, creative and unsurpassable. If asked why we should bother with forming a shared culture ... the faith-related school is able to say, 'Because your human experience will be a nonsense in the eyes of your maker if it does not include developing and learning a sense of common good. Because of God, in short.'" (Williams, 2003, p. 2)

Cardinal Basil Hume likewise saw Catholic schools as providing an education based on an experience of Christianity which:

"... affirms the unique value of each human being, made in the image and likeness of God. It is committed to a dynamic process of human growth ... it believes, therefore, that it is possible to seek and achieve wholeness at every level. It is that belief which inspires Christian education and the Church's witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ" (Hume, 1990, p. 22).

It may also be argued reasonably that, beyond this, other differing theological aims of the Anglican and Catholic systems remain as they have traditionally been. The 2001 Dearing Report reaffirmed the central purpose of Anglican schools as being that of service to the whole community, with its authors' terms of reference capturing the 1998 Resolution of the General Synod in the words:

"Believing that Church schools stand at the centre of the Church's mission to the nation". (Dearing, 2001, p. 2)

In doing so it reflected the Church of England's continuing role as the

national Established Church and two centuries of work in the field of mass education, apparently unaffected by the secularisation of the society it serves. Speaking shortly before he became Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams explained the situation thus:

"I think it is perfectly possible, and indeed quite right, for the Church to be a hospitable community, in the sense that it is saying 'we have a gift that has been given to us which we are very happy to lavish on anybody who wants to take any of it, with no questions asked. That gift is a particular kind of vision of God ... Now that means that if that commitment is strong and central, then a church school ought to be strong enough to cope with those who don't necessarily share the theology, the vision itself, but who are happy to [receive] what there is to be shared" (Williams, 2002).

As with the Church of England, the central purpose of the Catholic system appears rooted in its tradition: in the words of Cardinal Hume "the Church's aim has always been to provide a place at a Catholic school for every Catholic child" (Hume, 1995, p. 25). There has been no recent Catholic counterpart to the Anglican Dearing Commission's report on its schools, but a significant statement by the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales in 1996 restated the purpose of Catholic schools as:

"... to support Catholic parents in their responsibility for the academic, physical, spiritual, moral and religious education of their children in accordance with the teachings of the Church" (Catholic Bishops' Conference, 1996, p. 3).

It is, however, misleading to take these statements as simply confirming the status-quo for the contemporary church school systems - in the case of both churches they mask significant changes from past practice.

For the Church of England, the Dearing Report (2001) signified a notable change in how Church schools were regarded within the Church itself. In terms of the sense of confidence and ambition that runs through it, the Report provides a sharp contrast to the mood of the 1970s. It has already been shown how the tone of the Durham Report (1970) had been almost apologetic for the existence of Anglican schools, even though it had stopped short of recommending an end to the system and was, in any case, never adopted formally by the Board of Education or General Synod. That Report undoubtedly reflected the Anglican mood of the period, in which, when faced with a major financial challenge in the maintenance of its schools, the Church's Board of Education published a report in 1972, entitled *Crisis in Church Schools* in Church Schools', with the Bishop of London warning that unless some means could be found to correct the situation, "it will not be possible for the Dual System as we have known it to continue" (Church Times, 1972). In the General Synod debate that followed, even supporters of Anglican schools sounded pessimistic, if defiant. The Revd John Mullett spoke of the loss of a new voluntary aided secondary school project in Birkenhead through the effects of inflation, with the building completed as an LEA 'county' school:

"Do not let us close a school unless we have to: it is a place which is alive with people for five days a week. It should not go until every uneconomic church building has been swept from the face of the country" (ibid).

How different the tone of the Dearing Report three decades later! Where

the Durham Report had recommended change of status from 'aided' to 'controlled' for Anglican schools, the Dearing Report stressed the importance of the "distinctive identity of a Church school" (Dearing, 2001, para. 4.4., p. 19) and encouraged voluntary controlled schools to consider the benefits of changing to aided status (ibid, para 4.20, p. 24). Most significantly, Dearing proposed the provision of an additional 100 Anglican secondary schools over a 7-8 year period to redress the sector's primary/secondary imbalance, with an appeal for £25 million launched to support this, with enhanced primary provision in areas where this is sparse. (ibid, Chapter 5, pp. 34-44). Where appropriate, the Report welcomed ecumenical initiatives in the provision of new schools (ibid, pp. 30-31). The Report also identified rare cases where "the Church foundation of the school has been forgotten" (ibid, p. 20).

The Dearing Report, as noted already, stressed the importance of Anglican schools being inclusive in serving their wider communities (ibid, pp. 15-16, 27-30) insisting that any new schools should be so, whilst aiming to include "at least a substantial minority of pupils with a Christian background" (ibid, para. 4.47, p. 30). Notwithstanding this, it noted the increase in emphasis on the "nurture" or domestic purpose of Church schools since the Durham Report, which had placed all its emphasis on their "service", or general purpose:

"Following the increased standing of Church schools with parents and more generally with society, and the associated increase in demand for places, it has been inevitable that governing bodies of Voluntary Aided schools should respond to

the demand from Christian parents. Moreover, in an increasingly secular society the Church is right to respond to the concern of Christian parents to give their children the opportunity to experience what it is to learn in a distinctively Christian environment ... In noting today's increased welcome for distinctive approaches to education, we see no dichotomy between the service and nurture purposes of the Church in education" (ibid, paras. 3.19, 3.21, p. 13).

This aspect of the report has been criticised by some, notably the Anglican secondary school head teacher, Peter Shepherd, a consistent critic of the Church's current approach to pupil admissions. In particular, he sees Dearing as having:

"... failed to provide a coherent rationale for CE schools and [which] has actually encouraged the church leadership to betray what was at least an implicit policy - the 'mixed economy' of schools - in order to push for a monolithic 'inclusive' system ... [and of having failed] to provide a coherent rationale for CE schools [with] a lack of clarity ... on a number of signal issues; should the twin focus [nurture and service] be located within the system, as has been the traditional, if informed, policy, or in each individual school, thus ignoring what was actually happening in CE secondary schools" (Shepherd, 2004, p. 337).

Such views have not, however, found much support within Anglican circles. There may indeed be a lack of clarity on certain key points in the report and it may lack the strong theological justification for the service model found in the Durham Report, but few would accept his argument that, for secondary schools at least, "the nurture model has the only coherent rationale ... Just as the RC school is for Catholic children, so the CE school should be for CE children" (ibid, p. 346) or that, by implication, the service model is for service alone (ibid, p. 337), without the opportunity to teach Christianity as a living faith and to "challenge those who have no faith"

(Dearing, 2001, p. 4).

The Report also stressed the need for Anglican schools to be integrated fully into the life of parishes (ibid, Chapter 7, pp. 53-59) and challenges the church to encourage the vocation to teach and to support Christian teachers and leaders in all schools (ibid, Chapter 6, pp. 45-52).

Whilst not so apparent to the lay observer, equally significant changes have occurred in the Catholic school system, masked by seemingly unchanged official statements on their purpose. Before the Second Vatican Council, "a popular image of traditional Catholic schooling is that it could produce 'good Catholics' characterised by faith, deference and a Church-approved knowledge and understanding of the world and of the world to come" (Grace, 2002, p. 65). Whatever the intention, this reinforced the 'separateness' of the Catholic community in England:

"Pre-Vatican II Catholic schooling attempted to implant its idea that Catholicism was the repository of absolute religious truth and that all other religions and faith traditions were in error. Where Protestantism was in the ascendant, young Catholics were taught that they would have to be defenders of the faith in a hostile world" (ibid, p. 76).

As the Catholic Church in England adapted to the pressures of an increasingly secular society in the Post-Vatican II period, its schools also underwent significant change. Arthur (1995), in a book appropriately entitled *The Ebbing Tide* presented a case that Catholic schools were losing their distinctiveness, a consequence as much of lack of leadership as of



secularisation:

"Whilst the bishops seek to encourage their ideals of schools or 'faith communities' which are 'inspired by a single Christian vision', at the same time they devise policies which do not allow for the fulfilment of these ideals. Policies on admissions, for example, vary from diocese to diocese and from school to school and the admission of non-Catholics from a faith group defeats the principle of a 'faith community' inspired by a 'single Christian vision' ... The repeated statements of the bishops that the Catholic religion should permeate the whole curriculum have no foundation since their actual policies provide no methods for implementation ... Many Catholic schools, for all practical purposes, have either abandoned or been unable to integrate religion into the wider curriculum" (ibid, pp. 213-214).

According to Arthur, the Catholic bishops need to formulate a clear model of schooling and to enforce it, regardless of opposition, or

"the gradual deliquescence of Catholic schools, which began in the 1960s, will continue until at least in the secondary sector, they become institutions practically indistinguishable from those under LEA control" (ibid, p. 253).

Arthur sees the root of this problem as a compromise originating in the post 'Vatican II' debate within the Church, especially following the creation of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education by Pope Paul VI, and notes that the 'Vatican II' Declaration itself was in fact, the product of a wide ranging debate on the future identity of Catholic education between conservative and progressive bishops and that it is open to conservative or radical interpretation (ibid, pp. 50-51). This view is controversial and has been criticised by, amongst others, Sullivan (2001) and Grace (2002). Sullivan criticises Arthur for failing to appreciate the 'realities of office' and

need for Church leaders to compromise on occasions, whilst "he misconceives the complex relationship between culture and faith, assuming too readily that culture is always to be informed and corrected by faith in a one-way movement" (ibid, p. 39).

Thus it may be argued that, whilst many in the Catholic Church are heavily preoccupied with a challenging, and for some traumatic, debate on the nature of Catholic schooling in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and with the actual effects of significant change, the Church of England, with few similar challenges, has been free to respond with confidence to the recent popularity of church schools with government and the public at large. It is interesting to speculate on the possible reasons for the Church of England's rediscovered enthusiasm for its schools: it may simply reflect this new found popularity and confidence, or it may be that the potential significance of its schools in the Church's mission, at a time when church attendance is declining, has only recently been appreciated fully. As the Dearing Report (Op. cit., para. 7.1., p. 53) pointed out, the number of children in Anglican schools on a weekday often exceeds the total number of people in Anglican churches on a Sunday. Nevertheless, it seems remarkable that the Catholic system which underwent vast expansion, with great confidence in its future, in the 1950s, has all but rejected the opportunities for further expansion offered by the 2002 Education Act (Dean, 2001, p. 6), whilst the Church of England, which debated seriously its possible withdrawal from schooling in the 1970s, is undertaking significant secondary phase expansion at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: by 2004, 18 Anglican secondary schools had opened as new schools

or significantly expanded since 2001, with 18 new schools planned and 33 further possibilities under discussion (Board of Education, 2004b).

## **Strategic Partnership with the State**

### ***Response to national issues***

The wider political and educational context in which church schools operate, and especially the development of education marketisation since the 1980s, has been examined in some detail in the previous chapter. How the Anglican and Catholic churches have responded at a strategic level to contemporary political and educational developments has determined significantly the nature of the current systems. The relationship between the churches and government, at a central and local level, lies at the heart of the 'dual system' of education in England. The 1944 settlement strengthened greatly a partnership that had existed previously by formalising it, as noted earlier in this chapter. Whilst central government has always played the legislative role in education, prior to the 1980s it exercised little direct control on a day to day basis. Following the 1988 Act, however, this changed radically and it now, often through agencies such as Ofsted, directs the overall framework for schools, sets standards and has introduced a wide range of initiatives in support of its work. All of these have applied to church schools in the same way as to other schools, but the response on key areas of policy since the 1980s has often reflected the character and traditions of the churches in differing from the secular view.

As already demonstrated in the previous chapter, the marketisation of education has been central to the agendas of successive governments since the 1988 Education Reform Act. Whilst voluntary aided schools had always had greater independence than their nondenominational counterparts, the initial response of the church authorities to policies such as open enrolment and local management of schools, which sought to increase the independence of schools and to introduce competition between them, and to the ideology which underpinned them, was one of concern. An ideology which sought to improve educational standards through the 'survival of the fittest' at the expense of the weakest seemed to many to be incompatible with Christian values. In 1996 the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales published *The Common Good and the Catholic Church's Social Teaching* (Catholic Bishops' Conference, 1996), which stated:

"The Catholic Church in its social teaching explicitly rejects belief in the automatic beneficence of market forces. It insists that the end result of market forces must be scrutinised and if necessary corrected in the name of natural law, social justice, human rights and the common good. Left to themselves, market forces are just as likely to lead to evil results as to good ones ... The Church recognises that market forces when properly regulated in the name of the common good can be an efficient mechanism for matching resources to needs ..." (ibid, pp. 18-19).

Grace (2002, pp. 194-5) draws attention to the last sentence quoted above and to the attempts of some Catholic headteachers to work collaboratively to 'regulate' market forces in their schools, especially in Birmingham, where a 'Catholic Secondary Partnership' was established by the

Archdiocese of Birmingham to work collaboratively in areas such as staff and curriculum development and support for schools in difficulty (ibid, pp. 197-203). This included the establishment of the Zacchaeus Centre in 1995 in an attempt to address the problems of exclusions and social inclusion. Grace acknowledges, however, that the Birmingham response was unique and notes that research into the views of Catholic headteachers showed the largest group to be "pragmatic survivors" who took "no philosophical or moral" stance on marketisation (ibid, p. 192).

Chadwick (1997) shows that marketisation was equally unpopular with the Church of England, especially,

"Anglicans who had traditionally placed emphasis on the role of church schools as part of the local community ... An educational philosophy which seemed to encourage 'survival of the fittest' at the expense of others, and to view parents as consumers rather than partners, was profoundly disturbing to many who envisaged the Christian presence in education as one of reconciliation and service in the community and did not see market forces as providing the overarching motive to create a happy and prosperous society" (ibid, pp. 52-3).

Chadwick, however, believes that opposition from the churches also reflected a concern that the 1944 settlement, which had served them well, was being undermined (ibid, p. 52). She also describes in detail the successful campaign by the churches to secure the position of Religious Education in the curriculum of county and voluntary controlled schools (ibid, pp. 88-94), which had at one time seemed in danger of being 'squeezed out' by the new National Curriculum, a campaign led by the Church of England,

reflecting perhaps the general commitment of the 'national' church to the wider community. The Catholic Church's resistance to the National Curriculum, which it saw as reducing the importance of Religious Education in Catholic schools, was unsuccessful, however, when it failed in its attempt to have its schools exempted from the National Curriculum, as independent schools and City Technology Colleges were (ibid., p. 53).

The 1988 Education Act had also legislated for state maintained schools, including voluntary aided or voluntary controlled ones, to 'opt out' of local education authorities and become semi-independent 'grant maintained' (GM) schools. The first tranche to do so in 1989 included a number of Anglican and Catholic schools, and by the time of their abolition in 1998, out of a total of 503 GM primary schools 121 were Anglican and 60 were Catholic, whilst out of 583 GM secondary schools 41 were Anglican and 94 Catholic. The percentage of primary schools from each church to 'opt out', 2.6% of Anglican schools and 3.4% of Catholic Schools, was roughly in line with the national percentage of 2.7%. At secondary level the percentage was higher, with 20.7% of Anglican schools and 25.8% of Catholic schools being GM compared with 16.3% of all secondary schools (DfEE, 1998b, p.121), showing a higher level of popularity amongst church schools for GM status than existed nationally, but this must be put in its proper context - in ten years, despite great encouragement from Conservative governments, four out of five Anglican secondary schools, three out of every four Catholic secondary schools and 97% of all voluntary primary schools did *not* 'opt out'. Furthermore, the issue provoked fierce controversy in each church,

with the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church in particular strongly opposed to GM status.

With the benefit of hindsight, perhaps the GM issue was less of a threat to the character of church schools than was perceived at the time, and possibly the real significance of the opposition from many Catholics and Anglicans was the extent to which it was based on Christian concern over the perceived inequalities of GM schools, which were seen to benefit both financially and in terms of status at the expense of other maintained schools. Paradoxically a greater threat to the religious character of Church schools can be seen in the 'settlement' of the GM issue by the Labour Government's School Standards and Framework Act, 1998 (DfEE, 1998a), under which, from September 1999, all GM schools returned to the LEA system, it being assumed that church GM schools would return as voluntary (aided or controlled) schools in accord with their pre-GM status. In the event, a number of Catholic and Anglican GM schools seem to have seriously considered opting for the alternative 'foundation' status intended for former non-church GM schools (Dean 1998, p.1), which would involve only a minority of governors being appointed by Church trustees, no restrictions being permitted on the religion of head teacher or staff, and a denominational RE syllabus being taught only to children whose parents requested it. In the face of this threat, both churches applied pressure on their GM schools to opt for voluntary status, with the Catholic bishops issuing an ultimatum to Catholic GM schools to return to aided status or have all Church links cut off (ibid, p.1). Ultimately only one Catholic GM

secondary school becomes a 'foundation' school, with no Anglican schools opting for that status.

It would be a mistake, in view of the evidence, to see the contemporary relationship in education between the churches and central government purely in terms of the churches responding to a stream of legislation which they frequently disliked, had no significant power to influence at its inception, and were generally unable to oppose successfully in its implementation. Not only has the 'dual system' remained largely in the form that it had taken after the 1944 Education Act, but even at the height of the GM schools debate in the early 1990's there is little evidence that, after their initial opposition to the principles of marketization and their specific opposition to GM and foundation status for church schools, either Anglican or Catholic authorities or, in general, their schools offered resistance to the agendas of either the Conservative or Labour governments. Indeed, as has been noted in Chapter 3, initiatives such as the Specialist Schools programme in the 1990s have been supported with as much enthusiasm as in the community schools sector, and the Church of England in particular has emerged as a leading player in the development of City Academies, with eight opened or planned in the last four years (Board of Education, 2004a, p.1.) and considerable interest shown in further involvement at a recent meeting between several Anglican bishops and the Academies Division of the DfES (ibid, pp 6-9).

Nor would it be correct to characterise this relationship as being entirely



one in which the churches respond to government legislation and initiatives. In the key area of financial support for capital projects in voluntary aided church schools, there have been significant government responses to requests for assistance by the churches, at a time when the ability of dioceses and parishes to raise the governors' contributions for these schemes has come increasingly under pressure (Arthur, 1995, p 90 and Hall, 1998, pp 49-50). This has included the reduction in the size of their contribution from 15% to 10% of total costs in 2002, as already noted, although the transfer of responsibility for school kitchens and heating from LEA's to governors at the same time was seen by many in the churches to have more than neutralised the effect of this, especially at a time when capital spending was increasing significantly. More importantly, government efforts to facilitate the church schools sector's full involvement in major national investment in school buildings since the late 1990s appear close to fruition.

These efforts included the establishment of a joint venture company, Partnerships for Church of England schools, between the DfES, the Church of England and Partnership UK, to facilitate a high level of investment, including private finance, in the Anglican system (Chesters, 2003) and attempts to find a similar mechanism for the Catholic system. This failed because of changed Ministerial priorities (Whittington, 2004) although the project had been fraught with technical difficulties from the start, not least because of its private finance element intended to resemble closely Private Finance Initiatives (PFI) in the community sector, but alternative routes now

seem likely to bring massive new capital investment in church schools (ibid). The financial implications of this for the churches secondary schools, many of which are to be rebuilt under the government's 2003 'Building Schools for the Future' programme and where the governors' 10% contribution for each new aided church school might be as high as £1.5million, have been recognised. An agreement for up to 100% government funding for such schemes and for more flexibility for governing bodies to raise their 10% contributions for other schemes has been accepted in principle by the Secretary of State, following a letter from the Anglican Bishop of Portsmouth and Catholic Archbishop of Birmingham, who respectively chair their churches' national bodies (Board of Education, 2004c) and was confirmed in 2005 (National Society, 2005).

### ***Partnership at the local level***

Despite the fears that GM schools, or perhaps even direct legislation, would lead to the end of LEAs, they remain the focus of educational activity at the local level, albeit in a different type of partnership with schools and diocesan authorities to that of the pre 1988 period.

Whilst pointing to a varied relationship between Catholic authorities and LEAs, Cardinal Hume believed the relationship to have "on the whole, proved to be an important and stabilising factor in Catholic education, providing a good basis for co-operation and partnership" (Hume, 1994, p. 118), whilst the Dearing Report stated that "The Church [of England] and LEAs have had a long and productive relationship characterized by a spirit of

co-operation and genuine debate” (Dearing, 2001, p. 24).

The direct control that LEAs had over schools before 1988, including in large measure church schools, has been replaced by a partnership in which LEAs retain responsibility for supporting schools in curriculum matters, except for RE in voluntary aided schools, for individual pupil support and welfare, for funding schools and, in partnership with the churches, for planning the provision of school places and co-ordinating major capital projects and, from 2004, admissions. There is much evidence that church schools generally value their relationship with LEAs (Chadwick, 1997, p.64), but that Anglican diocesan authorities perhaps value their partnerships with LEAs to a greater extent than their Catholic counterparts (ibid, p65). Certainly the existence of a high proportion of Anglican voluntary controlled schools has led to a closer and rather different relationship between Anglican diocesan authorities and their LEAs, compared to that enjoyed by Catholic dioceses.

Nevertheless, the partnership between LEAs and dioceses has often produced difficulties, for example over the provision of sixth forms in LEAs where nondenominational secondary schools do not have them, admission arrangements for aided church schools where these are seen to be selective or divisive and, on occasions, over provision of pupil transport when a church school serves a geographically wide area (ibid, p. 63). In particular, difficulties are sometimes experienced over school reorganisations affecting church schools, usually instigated by an LEA, but which can under specific circumstances, be effectively vetoed by a diocesan authority. Statutory

guidance for decision makers on the closure of schools (DfES 2000, p. 13) makes it clear that any proposals to close church schools must take account of the effect this will have on the balance of denominational provision and non-denominational provision in the area. Unless the church school concerned has severe under-subscription or is a failing school, any closure proposals that would lead to a reduction in the proportion of denominational places within an LEA must be rejected if the relevant church authorities oppose closure.

A recent report produced by the Audit Commission ((DfES, 2004) comments upon the nature of the relationship between LEAs and diocesan authorities for both churches. Commenting upon the differing approaches to mission between the churches that in turn affect relationships with LEAs, it notes that the Catholic system is often "relatively self-contained alongside the community schools" whilst Church of England schools "often act in effect as community schools" (ibid, p. 8) which requires an extra degree of collaboration with the LEA.

"complicating matters further, each diocese, both within the Anglican and the Roman Catholic Church, has a degree of independence and may take a different view of an issue from its neighbour. All this may affect what is possible in terms of working together to tackle falling rolls. It has been possible, for example, to successfully pursue development of ecumenical or inter-faith schools in some authorities but not in others". (ibid).

The report goes on to quote examples of issues which have been difficult to resolve, including disagreements over the minimum effective size for a primary school and whether a school created by the amalgamation of a

church school and a community school should have church or community status. Nor would it be correct to see such difficulties entirely in terms of LEA plans being frustrated by church authorities, as the report also states, "there have been examples of diocesan authorities frustrated in their desire to rationalise provision by the lack of political will on the part of the LEA to take action" (ibid, p. 9). Giving the example of successful co-operation between Knowsley LEA and its partner Anglican and Catholic diocesan authorities, the report concludes that successful diocesan-LEA partnerships are based on:

"sharing information and planning future action together. Regular meetings at appropriate levels should cover not only day to day operational issues, relating to such matters as asset management and human resources, but wider strategic issues, relating to the achievement of a long-term vision for the provision of education [together with] planning and implementing re-organisation proposals as far as possible in tandem" (ibid, p. 9).

Despite the difficulties sometimes experienced in these partnerships at a local level, they remain strong in most LEA areas and are now formalised in a number of statutory bodies. These include, in each LEA, with representation from the Catholic and Church of England dioceses:

- 1 The Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee, an LEA body, sometimes titled differently, to oversee the work of the LEA, on which diocesan representatives have voting rights alongside councillors.
- 2 The School Organization Committee, a body independent of the

LEA but including members from it, the Church of England and Catholic dioceses and other groups, to take decisions on school organisation matters.

3 The Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) which advises the LEA on Religious Education which, with the Agreed (RE) Syllabus Conference, has responsibility for RE in community and voluntary controlled schools.

4 The Admissions Forum, which reviews the LEA co-ordination of school admissions and the policies of different 'admission authorities', including governing bodies of voluntary aided and foundation schools.

The remit of these statutory groups, all of which have come into existence since 1988, is explained in detail by Lankshear and Hall (2003, pp. 122-124), and have increased considerably the formal role played by diocesan authorities in the local educational process.

### **Strategic Policy Production within the Churches**

An understanding of how the two churches operate within the national education system cannot be complete without reference to their internal policy making processes at a strategic level and the structures that support them. In both churches policy is produced in the same way, namely:

- 1 Through the production of policy texts, which range from major reports and policy statements to the more subtle publication of 'advice'.
- 2 The interaction, or 'discourse' with government and other agencies, schools and between national and diocesan bodies within each church itself.

The creation of strategic policy in these ways occurs at both the national level and local, diocesan level and often involves interaction between each level. What is, in general terms, the same process within each church is supported by very similar structures, with national and diocesan policy making bodies supported at each level by professional administrative structures. Despite the obvious similarities between the churches, however, significant differences also exist which reflect the different characters of the churches themselves.

At the national level this work is carried out by the Church of England Board of Education and the Catholic Education Service. The Board of Education, which reports to the Archbishops' Council, advises the Archbishops' Council and General Synod on education policy matters and is responsible for developing policy approved by them, representing their interests and those of Anglican schools with the Department for Education and Skills in particular (Lankshear & Hall, 2003, p. 132). Its work in advising schools is undertaken in partnership with the National Society, founded in 1811, most

of whose officers are employed jointly with the Board of Education. Members of the Board of Education are appointed by the Archbishops' Council and General Synod and, to some extent at least, this aspect of Anglican policy making can be seen as democratic, reflecting the work of a General Synod whose members are elected by diocesan synods which are in turn elected through a system involving deaneries and parishes (Furlong, 2000, pp 176-188). On occasions the educational policy decisions of the General Synod and Archbishops' Council have been informed by the reports of specially commissioned review groups, for example the 1970 Durham Report and the 2001 Dearing Report. The democratic nature of Anglican policy making at this level is sometimes enhanced further by the requirements for some General Synod decisions to be approved by Parliament, for example, the 1991 Diocesan Boards of Education Measure, a feature of Anglicanism as the Established state religion (Davie, 1994, p 144).

In comparison with this, the Catholic system at a national level reflects the hierarchical nature of the Catholic Church. Despite the undoubted increase in the involvement of the laity in the day to day life of the church and the attempt to formalise this in the 1980 National Pastoral Congress at which more than 2,000 delegates and clergy, including 42 bishops, met to discuss a range of issues affecting the church (Hornby-Smith, 1987, pp 36-46) it certainly cannot be claimed that the structures of the Catholic Church have become significantly 'democratic' in the transition from the earlier 'mechanistic' model to the newer, post-Vatican 'organic model' (Ibid, p 36). It is not, therefore, surprising to find that the Catholic Education





Service is managed by a committee appointed by its Chairman, a bishop appointed by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, whose educational policy it is responsible for informing and implementing (CES, 2003a). The CES was founded by the English and Welsh Bishops in 1847 as the Catholic Poor School Committee and is a charitable trust which operates through its management committee and a number of forums which, like its Anglican counterpart, represents the church to central government and advises schools on a range of issues, including admissions, teachers and Religious Education. Policy decisions are taken by the Bishops' Council in whose name most national reports on Catholic education are published, Grace,( 2002, p. 30) considers that:

"the hierarchy of the Catholic Church represents an agency of considerable symbolic power and the Catholic bishops have used this power to develop, shape and control Catholic education in specific ways. Catholic bishops have spoken and acted with a powerful authority, which for Catholics represents a mediated form of the symbolic power of the Pope, viewed as the Vicar of Christ on Earth" (Ibid).

It would be wrong, however, to view the decision making process in either church as being overly centralised. Considerable decentralisation of powers has occurred to Diocesan Boards of Education in the Church of England and to each bishop in his diocese in the Catholic Church.

At the diocesan level, the Anglican system has important democratic features, with the majority of members of a Diocesan Board of Education being elected by deanery and diocesan synods and only a minority appointed

directly by the diocesan bishop (General Synod, 1991, pp. 7-9). The 1991 Diocesan Boards of Education Measure (ibid) required every diocese to have its own Board of Education with a Diocesan Director of Education as its principal officer, which is required to report on its work to the diocesan synod and the Bishop's Council. It is charged with the responsibility of making educational policy decisions on behalf of the diocese, which it represents to LEAs in its area, and has a range of statutory duties in terms of advice to governing bodies on matters such as admissions, and the co-ordination of capital works for voluntary aided schools (Lankshear and Hall, 2003, pp. 129-131). The work of Diocesan Boards of Education was analysed by Gay and Williams (1995) who identified a wide variation in the styles of approach adopted to fulfil their roles (ibid, p. 25), with increasing financial challenges matched by new opportunities for the support of church schools as LEA advisory services in many areas contracted as funding for them was delegated to schools.

Within the Catholic system, as noted, each bishop has jurisdiction over the schools in his diocese, sometimes acting with other bishops to produce joint policy statements on education, but usually acting independently in their own dioceses with the advice and support of senior clergy who, with the bishop, are Diocesan Trustees. Each diocese also has a Schools Commission in an advisory capacity for the Trustees, made up of representative clergy and laity, which employ professional advisory and administrative staff (Sullivan, 2001, pp. 50-51). Schools Commissions operate in a similar way to their Anglican counterparts, facing the same challenges and opportunities.

In the Anglican system the trustees of an individual school are usually the Vicar and Churchwardens of the parish in which it is located but who have residual powers only under the statutory authority of their Diocesan Board of Education (Lankshear and Hall, 2003, p. 128). A minority of Catholic schools, which are not under diocesan trustees, are under the trusteeship of different religious orders. These communities of men or women, many of which have their headquarters in other countries, own their schools and are responsible in law for their buildings and governance (Sullivan, 2000, pp. 10-11). Whilst nominally subject to the authority of the diocesan bishop, in practice they tend to act with some independence and "to make their own decisions about what sort of Catholic schools they provide and in what locations" (Grace, 2002, p. 30).

The process of policy production and the structures which support it in each church at national and diocesan level can clearly be seen to reflect the characteristics of each church. Superficially, there is little sign of convergence between the churches in this aspect of their educational work, but it should not be overlooked that at both national and diocesan levels events have caused them to work more closely together, especially since the 1980s. This may in part reflect ecumenical co-operation, but certainly reflects the additional requirements placed on each church by the state to work together more closely with LEAs and other partners in the increasing range of public committees, forums and other public bodies as described in the previous section. Furthermore, each church has been affected in a similar way by the marketization of education since 1988, which has seen

increased independence given to schools, especially in the areas of governance, admissions and staffing (Chadwick, 1997, p. 73) and the growth of what has been termed "parentocracy" (Grace, 2002, pp. 31-35). At the same time, both churches have themselves taken advantage of the education market place by expanding their own support services or schools, paid for by schools through a variety of trading agreements (Chadwick, 1997, p. 75 and Hall, 1998, p. 49). Gay and Williams (1995, pp. 20-21) found that only nine of the thirty nine Anglican Diocesan Boards of Education taking part in their survey made no charge for their services to schools, whilst fifteen offered a significant range of services. Typically these included governor training, R.E. and collective worship advice and training, support before and after school inspections, personnel, insurance and property services, and advice on admissions and appeals.

### **Signs of convergence at the strategic level**

In this chapter it has been demonstrated how the churches have adapted at the strategic policy level to the challenges of secularisation and the significant political changes in education following the 1988 Education Act. In what might be characterized as each church moving towards a kind of centre ground, it may be seen that each has changed its tradition or approach to schools, to some degree at least. In the case of the Catholic Church, this has reflected the wider changes in which the "fortress church" culture has been abandoned after the Second Vatican Council, whilst government control over the curriculum, governance and admissions for

church schools, together with increased financial support, have significantly reduced the independence of the Catholic system. Parallel to this, the Anglican system, subject to the same government actions, has, in the period between the 1970 Durham Report and the 2001 Dearing Report rediscovered the importance of Anglican Schools and come to place significant emphasis on the importance of developing their Christian distinctiveness. These changes have occurred in the context of ecumenical co-operation which would have been inconceivable a generation ago and which is most clearly demonstrated in the small, but growing, number of joint Anglican/Catholic schools in England. These developments will be examined in greater detail in the following chapter, but it is important to note that such schools are still not "something Roman Catholic authority necessarily wishes to encourage; rather they are to be tolerated ... when the alternative is no Catholic education at all in a particular place" (Chadwick, 1994, p. 56). They are nevertheless a consequence of Anglican and Catholic diocesan policy wherever they exist, and their number is steadily increasing. In 1984 there were six joint Anglican/Catholic schools and one joint Sixth Form (Chadwick & Gladwell, 1987, p. 33) which has risen to fourteen schools in 2004, with eight more under consideration (Board of Education, 2004b).

Given their apparent significance, it is perhaps surprising that hardly any policy statements have been made on them at a national level. The most significant were those issued in 1994 by Bishop David Konstant and Bishop Michael Adie, the then Catholic and Anglican spokesmen for education, who issued a statement on behalf of the English Anglican-Roman Catholic

Committee (Chadwick, 1999, p. 13) and in the Dearing Report (2001, pp. 30-31) on the future of Church of England Schools. The first of these stated "Joint schools are in no way second best to single-denomination schools ... [they indicate] real potential for a common witness to Christian faith" (Chadwick, op. cit.). The Dearing Report referred to "good examples of collaborative working between denominations in existing schools, and in development of new schools" (2001, p. 30) and went on to note the need to avoid destabilising any existing denominational schools and to recommend that

"in appropriate circumstances the Church should welcome an ecumenical approach to church schools, actively fostering a will for the denominations to work together, and the dioceses should through continuing contact with other denominations be continually alert to opportunities" (ibid, p. 31).

This may reflect the fact that joint schools, whilst significant in terms of what they represent and growing in numbers, nevertheless remain a very small part of church school provision. According to Arthur (1995, p. 226) most such schools were created for pragmatic reasons "as a result of the failure of existing Church schools or the inability of one or both Church bodies to provide a Church school except as a joint school" (ibid). These schools were not, however, lacking in vision and "moreover, pragmatism often gives birth to idealism" (Holness, 2000, p. 13). Cardinal Hume is quoted as saying "Christian ecumenical schools have broken new ground and may well be a significant indication of a way forward" (Arthur, Op. cit., p. 226). The operation of joint Anglican/Catholic schools will be examined in the next chapter, but it is fair to say that support for them at a national policy making level is lukewarm at

present, especially in the Catholic Church, despite strong advocacy for them from, for example, Chadwick & Gladwell (1987), Sedgwick (1992) and Chadwick (1994, 1997). Notwithstanding this, the fact that such schools exist at all is a sign of changing times and of convergence between the systems that sponsor them.

In this chapter the main features of the Catholic and Church of England school systems have been examined as parts of the national education system to which they belong. The focus of the chapter has been on the strategic policy making level of the two systems, operating in a wide ranging context of influence. It illustrates well the view that policies are usually the "products of multiple (but circumscribed) influences and agendas [and that] there is ad hocery, negotiation and serendipity with ... the policy formulation process" (Ball, 1994, p. 16). Any policy study of this subject, however, must also refer in some detail to the interpretation and implementation of national policy at school level and it is this relationship, illustrating the concept of 'policy as discourse' (ibid, p. 21), that will be the focus of the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **THE SCHOOLS CONTEXT**

#### **POLICY INTERPRETATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOME**

Having examined the context in which church schools operate and the main organisational features of the Anglican and Catholic systems at national and diocesan level, attention is turned in this chapter to the schools themselves and their characteristics as agents of the churches' mission. Central to this chapter will be the differing ways in which Anglican and Catholic schools work to create a Christian ethos in particular contrasting their approaches to the admission of pupils, staffing, distinctive elements of the curriculum and issues of school governance and how these reflect the educational aims of the churches. This chapter, therefore, in effect focuses on how policy produced at the national and diocesan level is interpreted and implemented by church schools, sometimes producing outcomes not originally envisaged by the 'policy makers'.

Reference will be made to the evidence of their success in achieving their stated aims and to their work in terms of relationships with the wider educational world and society in general. In particular issues of the quality of education provided by church schools and the charge of social divisiveness, especially in multiracial communities, which is frequently



made against them, will be examined. The chapter concludes by examining the emergence in the final decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century of a small number of joint Anglican-Catholic schools.

### **Distinctiveness and Ethos**

It is clear that each church sees the fundamental purpose of its schools as being at the forefront of its mission to make Christ known to each generation. The most rudimentary analysis of the stated aims of Anglican and Catholic schools, however, reveals a different understanding by each church of what this mission involves.

From the Anglican viewpoint, church schools are seen as "mediating Christian culture to the next generation" (Alves, 1991, p.9). The emphasis here is on 'Christian culture' rather than a specifically Anglican doctrine, and on the teaching of a cross section of the nation's children rather than simply Anglican children. This latter point is developed by Francis (1993b, pp.53-54), who relates it to the role of the Church of England as the 'Established' national church and notes that whilst historically its 'domestic' purpose of educating Anglican children was in some respects indistinguishable from its 'general' purpose of educating the nation's children, this is no longer the case. This point was stressed in The Durham Report (1970) which stated that "nowadays no one would pretend to claim that nation and church were co-extensive" (ibid, para. 444, p. 208) and recommended that the Church of England should see its involvement in education "principally as a way of

expressing its concern for the general education of all children and young people rather than as a means for giving 'denominational instruction'." (ibid, p. 281).

Whilst this view, based upon a clear theology of service (Francis, 1993a, pp. 60-62), was by no means universally held at the time within the Church of England, it predominated for much of the period following in a range of models for a church school which:

"runs from the school which is seen as a place where Christian children are brought up in the Christian tradition, whatever may be the dominant tradition of the society immediately surrounding the school, to the school whose main purpose is to offer altruistic service in the name of Christ to the community in which it is set, whatever the religious background of that community may be." (Alves, op.cit., p.10).

Francis (2000, pp. 111-114) charts the way in which between the 1970 Durham Report and the 2001 Dearing Report, Anglican schools were encouraged to develop an increasingly Christian ethos. He notes that the 1984 Waddington Report, *A Future in Partnership*, argued that Anglican schools should be distinguished by ten theological criteria for a church school. These included:

"First, a safe place where ... Christian inferences are built into the ethos and teachings as signals for children to detect. ...

Fifth, a house of the Gospel in which, starting at governor and staff level, there is a deliberate attempt to link the concerns of Christ's Gospel with the life of the school, but do this in educational terms. ...

Sixth, a place of revelation and disclosure in which the rigour of learning and the art of acquiring skill are seen as parables of the revelation of God and His continuous involvement in His Creation....

Seventh, a foster home of enduring values and relationships in which the selfless care and unlimited Love of the Suffering Servant is the model for the life of the community....

Eighth, a beacon signalling the transcendent by the development of awe, mystery and wonder through the curriculum, exemplified in acts of corporate worship including contact with the Christian calendar

and sacraments....” (Waddington, 1984, p. 71).

Francis sees these characteristics as indicating “a renewed commitment to the religious distinctiveness of church schools which goes beyond the aim of service to engage with the aim of nurture and formation” (op.cit., p. 111) and goes on to show how the development of a distinctive Christian ethos was encouraged further in Anglican schools by the writings of Duncan (1986 and 1988) and Lankshear (1992a, 1992b, 1992c, and 1996). The distinctive characteristics of Anglican schools have also provided a focus for the training of denominational inspectors who operate alongside Ofsted under the Inspection Framework established by the 1992 Education Act (Brown & Lankshear, 1995, 1997 and National Society, 2004a).

By the turn of the century the mood in the Church had changed sufficiently for the Dearing Report to argue that “all Church schools must be distinctively and recognizably Christian institutions” (Dearing, 2001, para. 1.6, p. 2) and that “no Church school can be considered as part of the Church’s mission unless it is distinctively Christian” (ibid, para. 1.11., p. 3).

The Report continued:

“Although for a range of reasons there will be variations between one Church school and another, there will be certain core principles and values that should unite all Church schools within the Christian mission. These will be the gospel values of loving God and one’s neighbour, as well as the practical outworking of these values in how pupils are taught to conduct themselves and to relate to one another and to God’s world” (ibid, para. 4.3., p. 19).

The Report recommends that governing bodies adopt an 'ethos statement' which reads:

"Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church at parish and diocesan level.

The school aims to serve its community by providing education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers all its pupils." (ibid., para 3.24, p. 14)

It goes on to recommend that as a minimum, each Anglican school should:

- "2 Ensure that the school is led by a head teacher who is committed, with the help of staff, to establish and maintain the Christian character of the school in its day to day activities and in the curriculum;
- 3 Engage meaningfully in a real act of Christian worship every day;
- 4 Offer a school life that incorporates the values of the Christian faith
- ...
- 5 Ensure that religious education is given at least 5 per cent of school time and that the character and quality of religious education are a particular concern of the head teacher and the governing body;
- 6 Observe the major Christian festivals and in schools which other faiths are present ensure that those faiths are able *and encouraged* to mark their major festivals with integrity;
- 7 Maintain and develop an active and affirming relationship with a parish church;
- 8 Proclaim that it is a Church of England school on its external signboard and on its stationery and make appropriate use of Christian symbols inside and outside the school." (ibid., para 4.6., p. 20).

In contrast, "the primary function of Catholic schools... is to provide forms of education through which the essential doctrine and devotions of Catholicism are transmitted" (Haldane, 1996, p.133). As has been noted in Chapter 4, the extent to which Catholic schools in practice attempt this varies greatly (Arthur, 1995, Sullivan, 2001 and Grace, 2002), but in general, they still aim to provide education for Catholic children as part of their

Church's mission to maintain the Catholic faith in a predominantly non-Catholic country. In this sense their aims and theological justification are 'domestic' (Francis, *op.cit.*, p.53), with the emphasis on Catholic doctrine and traditions:

"Catholic schools are essentially an expression of the Church's salvific mission, since the Church is the context for all Catholic education. This identification with the Catholic Church, its mission and character, remains the principle grounding for the existence of Catholic schools. The salvific mission by which the Church interprets and directs its experience is also the mission upon which the aims and objectives of the Catholic school are based." (Arthur, 1995, p.46).

Within this theological tradition, it is argued that there is a distinction to be made between 'primary' and 'secondary' aims:

"Primary aims are constants, grounded in revealed truths about our nature, our origin and our destiny. Secondary aims are variables and involve educational theories, methods of teaching, administration and other techniques.... The whole of our nature, body, mind and soul, is to be fully developed, and not simply the spiritual to the neglect of the mental and bodily. The primary aim of Catholic education concerns our call to eternal life, while the secondary involves the essentials or means employed to this end" (*ibid*, p.48).

Thus the basic aims of Anglican and Catholic schools, whilst arguably closer now than at the time of the 1970 Durham Report, differ in their theological interpretation in a way that still clearly reflects the traditions and characteristics of each church.

Central to the achievement of these fundamental aims in both Anglican and Catholic schools is the attempt to create a 'Christian ethos' that goes beyond

an academic teaching and learning of the churches' faith, to enable pupils to experience the 'reality' of Christianity through all aspects of school life. Whilst ethos, and its spiritual dimension within a church school, is a particularly difficult thing to define, certain key features of it are identified in the writings of Anglican and Catholic educationalists which, again, establish both common ground and some significant differences between Anglican and Catholic schools.

At the most basic level the 'Christian ethos' of any church school should, according to these writers, reflect values that they see as common to all Christian communities. These include, in the view of Shepherd (1998, pp.15-38), Christian values taught through the curriculum - awe, wonder, fascination, humility, concern for the truth, rationality, responsibility, hope, and risk. To these should be added other Christian values to be experienced through life in the church school community - awareness of living in "a sacramental universe" (ibid, pp.39-40), of "the impact of the transcendent on our finite lives" (ibid, p.42), of the importance of relationships between individuals and with God (ibid, pp.45-78). It is, of course, the case that many of these values could legitimately be claimed by non-Christians and are to be found within the ethos of secular schools, but for church schools "these values ought to be considered non-negotiable and absolute, i.e. faith imperatives, which the very nature of our Christian tradition and experience gives us no choice but to accept" (ibid, p.10).

Such claims for the character and ethos of a church school apply equally in

the Anglican and Catholic systems, but cannot mask significant differences between them in other respects. The nature of the Church of England as a 'broad' Church which includes a full range of theological positions from 'Evangelical' and often fundamentalist Protestantism to 'High Church' Anglo-Catholicism, together with its aims of serving both the wider community, and the 'domestic' church community, means that Anglican schools normally do not go beyond attempting to achieve the general Christian ethos outlined above (Chadwick, 1994, pp.46-47). For Catholic schools however, which are generally clear about their mission to nurture the Catholic Faith in their pupils, a specifically Catholic ethos is aimed for which includes, but goes beyond, these 'general' Christian values and characteristics by adding, as far as possible, a Catholic interpretation of them. This has traditionally included what has been termed the 'Catholic dimension' to the secular curriculum, in which the work of God is interpreted through the whole curriculum, with for example, a Catholic view of science and the humanities as revealing God's work in the world being taught (Arthur, 1992, pp.157-163).

McLaughlin (1996) attempts to define the distinctiveness of Catholic education by identifying three related general features that underpin the ethos of which Catholic schools aspire:

- "1.     *The embodiment of a view about the meaning of human persons and of human life...* a specific concept of the world, of man, and of history is developed and

conveyed... based upon a specific theological and philosophical perspective...

2. *An aspiration to holistic influence.* At the heart of what is involved here is the claim that the Catholic school... so orientates the whole of human culture to the message of salvation that the knowledge which the pupils acquire of the world, of life and of men is illumined by faith...
3. *Religious and moral formation...* beyond the transmission of beliefs to the shaping of religious and moral personhood and character... not the teaching of an abstract body of truths, but rather... the communication of the living mystery of God (as presented by the Church)" (ibid, pp.140-143).

Critically, in each of these features, it is the theological interpretation of the Catholic Church that determines the view of 'humanity', 'salvation', and 'morality', giving a distinctiveness to the ethos of a Catholic school that is different from the characteristics of Anglican schools. Notwithstanding this, it is important to avoid the trap of believing that the ethos of a Catholic school is as clear as once it was. Chadwick (1994, pp.50-51) considers that beyond the particular forms of worship used and the presence of crucifixes in school halls and classrooms, other 'typical' Catholic characteristics are less obvious. The development of critical Catholic



theology, ecumenical relations, social teaching and even the debate within the Church on sexual morality mean that "there is no consensus amongst those working in Catholic education about the distinguishing characteristics of a Catholic school" (ibid, p.51): something that would have been unthinkable only a few decades ago. Even the Catholic dimension to the secular curriculum has been questioned within the Catholic church by those who argue that "there is no such thing as a Catholic history or Catholic science and it was damaging for the church to attempt to seek to create them" (Arthur, 1992, p.160). This lack of consensus should not, however, be taken to indicate the lack of a distinctive ethos in Catholic schools, but rather a lessening of its distinctiveness in a way that is probably inevitable, given the vast changes that the Catholic Church has undergone since the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s.

For both Anglican and Catholic schools, an important contribution to their ethos is made through links with their local churches and the work of clergy and chaplains in the schools. It has been noted in Chapter 4 that the origins of most church schools are inextricably linked with their local churches and even today the great majority of Anglican and Catholic primary schools are parish schools (Arthur, 1995, p. 37 and Lankshear, 2002, pp. 16-17). It has also been noted that in a majority of cases the trustees of an Anglican school are the incumbent and wardens of the parish church with which it is linked, although this particular connection is not found for Catholic schools, where the trustees are invariably the diocese or a religious order. The strength of the actual relationship between a church school and its local

church, however, varies considerably, although there is clear evidence that this relationship has been stronger in the Catholic sector (Arthur, 1995 and Hornsby-Smith, 1978, 1987) than in the Anglican sector (Dearing, 2001 and Lankshear, 2002). The variable quality of these relationships is an issue of concern in both churches.

Within the Catholic Church there are concerns about the weakening of a relationship that has once underpinned everything that Catholic schools did. Arthur (1995, pp. 235-241) charts the weakening of this relationship between a typical Catholic secondary school from 1960 giving specific examples, including the declining role of parish priests in recruiting pupils, chairing the governing body, undertaking the role of chaplain and celebrating Mass on a regular basis in the school. He acknowledges that this is partly due to the increased work load of a declining number of priests and that this relationship remains stronger in the primary sector than the secondary sector, but it is clear that these changes also reflect the weakening position of the Church in the face of secularisation and the sharp decline in church attendance. Grace (2002, pp. 220-225) also examines the changing relationships between schools and their local churches, based upon a survey of sixty Catholic secondary school headteachers. Whereas in the 1960s the relationship between church and school was clearly two-way, with most Catholic pupils to be found at Mass on a Sunday, this had changed significantly by the end of the century when, for a majority of Catholic secondary pupils "school is the living church and parish" (*ibid.*, p. 223). Grace acknowledges the complexity of the reasons for this, but notes that:

"From the perspectives of many of the headteachers there was too much disjuncture between the liturgical life of Catholic secondary schools which emphasised creativity, activity and participation by the young and the liturgical culture of local parishes and churches which in the main involved a ritual of prescribed responses and limited scope for participation. If there was a crisis about the active Catholicity of the young, then, in the view of the headteachers, the problem was located to an important extent in the parishes and not in the secondary schools" (ibid., p. 220).

Within the Catholic system, therefore, the focus of concern is on the weakening of a traditionally strong relationship between schools and churches at the local level. Within the Anglican system, however, the focus is rather different, reflecting a situation in which the relationship between school and church was by the 1960s sometimes a tenuous one. According to the Dearing Report in 2001:

"One diocese commented in its evidence that on occasion it was approached by schools that were unsure why they were Church schools and reported that a further group would be difficult to distinguish from Community schools. Another diocese similarly recorded that some of its schools were hardly recognisable as Church schools and asked for some strategic guidance on 're-Christianising' them. A third said that 'at least one Church school had only been persuaded of its Church status in the last couple of years'." (ibid., p. 20).

The Dearing Report went on to say that Church schools are not an add on, but integral to the life and ministry of the local church. "Reciprocally, Church schools, whether voluntary aided or controlled should see themselves as a living, collaborating part of the Church community, each knowing that it is supported by the prayers and ministry of the other"

(ibid., p. 53). The report emphasised the importance of the whole Church community being involved with the school, rather than only the incumbent, but also identifying an important role for the clergy in Church schools and recommended that specific training should be provided to clergy in order to support this role (ibid., pp. 55-59). It also recommended that:

- "1 Parishes and schools should pray regularly for each other.
  - 2 The clergy appointments procedure should ensure that, where there is a church school in the parish, prospective clergy are given a job description that makes explicit their responsibilities towards that school.
  - 3 Whether or not the chair of the governors of the church school, the incumbent should always be involved in the selection of a new head and new teaching staff.
  - 4 Where it is the practise for the parish to be involved in the appointment of a new incumbent, the head teacher of the church school in the parish should be involved....
  - 5 Dioceses should be ready to assist clergy and school heads if the relationship between school and parish is in disrepair."
- (ibid., pp. 54-55).

The importance of relationships between Anglican schools and their local churches was stressed by other writers around the time of the Dearing Report, for example Lankshear (1996, 2002a) and Ainsworth (1997) and the issue is clearly regarded as important in helping to establish a school ethos that is distinctively Christian in the Anglican tradition.

For both churches the work of clergy and sometimes lay people as, in effect, chaplains is of particular importance in underpinning the ethos of church schools and is a major feature of a relationship between school and parish. At primary level this involves local clergy having pastoral responsibilities for the pupils and staff in their schools, although the extent

of the involvement varies considerably as already noted. As a minimum, this usually involves regular visits, usually to lead collective worship, sometimes to teach, and will usually also involve leading school worship and celebrations in the local church when appropriate. There is little difference between Anglican and Catholic practise in this respect. At secondary school level the situation is more formalised, with a specific post of chaplain usually established. Until recently, this post was generally held by a member of the clergy, but in both churches this practise is changing.

In Anglican secondary schools it is still usual to find such posts occupied by clergy. Ainsworth (1997, pp. 13-21) identified a number of models of chaplaincy including:

- 1 Full time ordained chaplains, usually with some teaching commitment, with the appointment usually shared by the school and diocese, but cost met by the school. This model was seen to have the advantage of the chaplain being fully engaged with the school and is a visible statement of the church's commitment to it, but the disadvantages of the post being regarded by pupils as part of the school 'establishment' and, where a teaching commitment was involved, a possible clash of commitment.
- 2 Another model involved the use of a number of clergy, each attached to a particular year group, which allowed for greater involvement with pastoral issues, but provided a significant challenge in terms of overall teamwork and leadership.

- 3 The most common model, however, involved a parish priest with a part-time commitment as chaplain, with the school contributing part of the priest's stipend. This model was seen to have the advantage of relative independence from school structures but the disadvantage of conflicting demands in terms of time and the danger that one role might suffer because of the other.

The role of chaplain is only briefly referred to in the Dearing Report (2001, p. 56) and by Lankshear and Hall (2003), but the National Society (2004b) has recently published guidance, including a model job description which recognised that the modern chaplain may well be a lay person who, in addition to undertaking pastoral work in the school, facilitates the involvement of clergy and local churches on a regular basis. There are striking similarities between this document and the advice issued by the Catholic Education Service (2004a) for the employment of lay chaplains.

Whilst it is clear that there are still many 'priest-chaplains' in Catholic secondary schools and that it is for each Catholic diocese to determine its own policy, the advice of the Catholic Education Service is that schools appoint lay people to this role. A Catholic lay chaplain should be employed and funded by the governing body and responsible to the head teacher on a day to day basis, but there is dual accountability which recognises the role of the bishop in aspects of Catholic education in his diocese. A clear job description is strongly recommended, and examples are given (*ibid.*, pp. 29-68) which establish a framework in which the chaplain should operate. It is

recommended that appropriate resources are made available for this work which would be supported in each diocese by a Diocesan Chaplaincy Co-ordinator. As with the latest Anglican model for chaplaincy, a key role for the chaplain is seen to be the development of school/parish links and co-ordinating visits by local clergy to school.

Whilst the intended ethos of Anglican and Catholic schools are clearly different to the extent that they reflect the traditions and beliefs of each church, it will also be seen that there are significant similarities in terms of the aims and practise at school level. It will also be apparent that the impact of a number of factors, in particular secularisation, has led to significant convergence in this area. As Catholic schools have, since the 1960s lost some of their distinctive ethos, so Anglican schools have been encouraged to develop what was often a weak ethos into a distinctively Christian one, schools in both systems moving towards a similar position, if not common ground.

Given the differences remaining between Anglican and Catholic schools in terms of their aims and ethos, however, it is not surprising to find that they continue to differ also in the ways in which they work to achieve these through their policies towards Religious Education, pupil admissions, staffing and governance in particular, and in the ways schools in each system relate to wider society as a result of these policies.

## Religious Education and Collective Worship in the Curriculum of Church Schools.

It has already been noted that neither Anglican nor Catholic schools aim to limit the religious experience of their pupils to a single subject in the taught curriculum, or indeed to isolated acts of worship, however regular, but rather seek to create a Christian ethos that is evident in every aspect of school life. Bishop Patrick Kelly of Salford, subsequently Archbishop of Liverpool, made this clear in the debate about the place of RE in the 1987-8 'Education Reform Bill': "for ourselves a school does not become a school meeting our vision, because it has RE secured. Our vision is of a wholeness for everyone inspired by the Gospel. We have questions to ask about the whole curriculum, not just about RE" (Kelly, 1987, p.16). Nevertheless, Religious Education and worship are clearly areas in the life of a church school to which particular importance is attached and the differences between the practices of Anglican and Catholic schools in this area again reflect the traditions and aims of the two churches themselves. Clearly a detailed analysis of Religious Education in church schools is beyond the scope of this work, but certain key features of the subject are relevant in support of its central argument.

As noted, the Church of England, partly for historical and financial reasons, has been willing to maintain a large number of 'voluntary controlled' schools. Indeed, more than half of all pupils in Anglican schools are educated in voluntary controlled schools. In contrast, voluntary aided



schools make up in effect the whole Catholic system. The significance of this in terms of Religious Education is that a voluntary controlled school must follow the RE Agreed Syllabus established by its Local Education Authority, in the same way as secular 'community' schools must, rather than the RE syllabus established by the Church authorities in each diocese for voluntary aided schools. Whilst the Agreed Syllabus is by definition non-denominational, the RE syllabus for an Anglican or Catholic voluntary aided school reflects the doctrine of its church.

In view of these facts the Catholic Church, at great cost, has maintained all its schools with voluntary aided status in order to be able to control the RE teaching and ethos of each. Indeed, it is inconceivable that, given the mission of a Catholic school, voluntary controlled status could be considered, even in the most exceptional circumstances. It is interesting to speculate, however, that part of the willingness of the Church of England to maintain so many voluntary controlled schools may reflect its lack of narrowly defined doctrine and its mission as the Established national church to serve the wider community. In such circumstances it is unsurprising that having to teach an LEA Agreed RE Syllabus in so many Anglican schools is not an issue for either the Church or the schools themselves. This view would seem to be confirmed by the claim that even in Anglican voluntary aided schools, less time is given to Religious Education and its related aspects than in Catholic schools (Francis, 1993b, p.166), despite the pressures of the National Curriculum.

This is not to suggest that Anglican schools, of whatever status, are unconcerned about their religion:

"Many Anglican schools have reflected as strong a conviction that Christian nurture through the schools is integral to their role of serving the Church by encouraging Christian commitment, based upon proper knowledge and understanding. Just as Roman Catholic schools would be unlikely to have hesitations about the importance of teaching their pupils the meaning of baptism or Eucharist, so also Anglican schools may not be reticent, whether about the sacraments or the gospel or about providing specific instruction in the essentials of faith and Christian morality" (Chadwick, 1994, p.27).

A significant part of the religious teaching of Anglican schools, controlled and aided, is collective worship, which in all cases must reflect the rites, practice and doctrines of the Church of England. This should, as far as possible, be a daily event, and in the case of most Anglican schools often involves worship in the local church (Dearing, 2001, para. 4.4., p. 19). Notwithstanding this, even in voluntary aided Anglican schools "the priority is to ensure good quality teaching and learning, rather than to nurture pupils into Anglican doctrine" (ibid, p.29), and writers on this subject such as O'Keeffe (1986), Nugent and Hewitt (1996) emphasise that Anglican schools are not in the business of evangelising in any direct sense.

In contrast to the Anglican position on Religious Education, Catholic schools have in the past been explicit in their use of RE lessons to provide catechetical instruction, which includes preparation for first communion and confirmation (Chadwick, 1994, p.34), whilst their pupils until recently were taught little of non-Catholic religion (Francis, 1993b, p.167). This

approach was to some extent relaxed in recent years, most notably by the publication in 1988 of *Weaving the Web* (Lohan and McLure, 1988), a framework for RE in Catholic Secondary schools, by the National Project of Catechesis and Religious Education, with the endorsement of the English Catholic bishops. This was widely criticised within the Church "for its alleged lack of doctrinal content and presentation of all religions as being of equal value" (Arthur, 1995, p.65 and Baty, 2000, p. 69). It had been preceded by the publication of *Guidelines: Living and Sharing our Faith* (Gallagher, 1986) by the National Project, which sought to clarify the roles of schools, clergy and parents in both catechesis and more general religious education, the purposes of which were seen to be different. Largely as a result of criticism, however, *Weaving the Web* was replaced by Icons in secondary schools in 2000, whilst the primary Catholic RE syllabus, *Here I Am* has been modified after it too was criticised (Baty, 2000, p. 69). Nonetheless, the role of Catholic schools in preparing children for life as members of the Catholic Church remains strong, even if they are less clearly based upon dogmatic teachings than prior to the Second Vatican Council (Arthur, 1995, p. 80). This is reflected in links between schools and their local Catholic churches in terms of regular worship and their local priests in terms of school chaplaincy work, in ways that are entirely consistent with the traditions of the Church and the role of schools within its mission.

The importance of Religious Education and collective worship in church schools is emphasised by the special inspection framework, established under the 1992 Education Act to replace previous arrangements, and

amended in the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act which, in Section 23, allows for denominational inspection of Religious Education in Aided schools and all aspects of religious, spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments of pupils in all church schools. 'Section 23' inspections are carried out alongside Ofsted inspections by inspectors who have been approved by Anglican diocesan boards of education or Catholic diocesan bishops, and who are currently appointed by the school's governing body. Chadwick (1997, pp.116-117) reports the relative success of this system, which for the first time gave the churches the responsibility rather than simply the right to inspect their schools' provision of Religious Education and its related aspects.

### Governance

The extent to which the churches controlled their schools through the constitution of governing bodies has been noted in the previous chapter. Of critical importance is the fact that for voluntary aided schools the majority of governors are appointed by the churches, while for voluntary controlled schools these 'foundation governors' can only be a minority on the governing body. As noted, this is a major reason why there are no Catholic controlled schools, whereas approximately half of the Church of England's schools have controlled status. The constitution of governing body has been changed and their role and responsibilities strengthened by several pieces of legislation since the 1944 settlement, in particular by the 1980, 1986 and 1988 Education Acts. A further re-constitution of governing bodies was

required by the 2002 Education Act to be implemented no later than 2006, with new instruments of governance for each school, (DfES, 2003). Under the latest regulations, governing bodies of church schools will be able to determine their size, between 10-20 members for aided school and between 9-20 members for controlled schools, with at least a third of their members being parents, either directly elected or appointed as foundation governors. Foundation governors must outnumber other governors by two in an aided school, whilst in a controlled school at least two and no more than one quarter of the governing body should be foundation governors.

The responsibilities and duties of the governing body now cover most aspects of school life in terms of policy and direction, although the head teacher is responsible for the school's day to day management. Amongst other things, governors are responsible for deciding aims and policies of the school and how the standards of education can be improved, how the school should be run in general terms, oversight of the curriculum, determining and monitoring the school budget, appointing and managing staff (as employers in an aided school) and maintaining the building with major capital responsibilities in aided schools. With these powers and responsibilities, the governing body of a church school is in a critical position for ensuring that the aims and objectives of the two churches at national and diocesan level are achieved. In view of this, the appointment of suitable foundation governors has assumed great importance.

In the Catholic system, foundation governors are always appointed by the

trustees, usually the diocese, but often a religious order. Arthur (1995, pp. 147-148) reports attempts by the Church to negotiate with government to "filter out or inhibit regulations which bring [Catholic schools] into line with LEA maintained schools". Whilst in the absence of any defined democratic procedures for the appointment of Catholic foundation governors "participation it seems is restricted to 'active' support for the bishops' policies" (ibid.). Further to this, he states that "some bishops request a written promise of support for the trustees' policies before appointment can take place" (ibid., p. 162). Even so, there have been instances when a school community has used the powers of the trustees to appoint its own governors, causing the Archdiocese of Birmingham to remind schools on two occasions through its bulletin that all foundation governors were appointed by the Diocesan Commission (ibid., p. 216).

The Church of England likewise attaches great importance to the appointment of suitable foundation governors, although there are some differences in the process of appointment from that used by the Catholic Church. For Anglican primary schools the power of appointment is generally shared between the Parochial Church Council and the Diocesan Board of Education, with the incumbent of the parish to be an ex-officio foundation governor. For Anglican secondary schools it is usual for foundation governors to be appointed by the Diocesan Board of Education, most of which have clear policies about the type of person they are prepared to appoint (Lankshear and Hall, 2003, p. 73). The Dearing Report (2001) stresses the key role of the governing body and the need for relevant

training for foundation governors in particular (ibid., pp. 61-62), stating that:

"a strong, well-led governing body, supportive of the school, its teachers and its mission makes an important contribution to the school's well-being and effectiveness. The foundation governors will have an especial care for the school's Christian character" (ibid., para 8.6, p. 61)

### Staffing

The central importance of the religious aims and ethos of church schools is, unsurprisingly, reflected in their approach towards staffing matters, and in the related powers and guidance given to governing bodies. Whilst, in the case of voluntary controlled Anglican schools, the Church and its local foundation governors do not control the process of staff appointments because of their minority position on the governing bodies of such schools, there is generally an expectation that headteachers "will at least be sensitive to the interests of the foundation (although) a candidate may volunteer details about his or her church connection... but the absence of such information is not to be regarded as a demerit" (Nugent and Hewitt, 1996, p.31). Indeed, it would be illegal for a governing body to make personal Christian commitment a criterion for appointment to any post in a voluntary controlled school. In the case of voluntary aided schools, however, the governors are the employers of teachers and other staff, and headteachers are required by law to carry out their professional duties in accordance with any trust deed for their school. The LEA pays all staff, but the governing body determines staffing policies and makes staff appointments (Board of Education, 1998, p.9).

The differences between controlled and aided church schools in respect of staffing again emphasises the difference between Catholic and Anglican schools in terms of their traditional roles in the mission of their churches. The comparative lack of control over staffing by the Church of England in so many of its schools, the majority of which are of controlled status, is reflected in the lesser importance given to the religious background of staff in Anglican aided schools in comparison with the importance given to this in Catholic schools. Whilst it is unusual for a non-Anglican to be a head teacher of an Anglican aided school, it is by no means unknown, although non-Anglicans in this position are usually Christians belonging to another church. In the case of Catholic schools, however, it is virtually impossible for a non-Catholic to be a head teacher, and most unusual for a senior member of staff to be a non-Catholic, conditions that are a requirement of the Catholic Church. Concerns within the churches that new EU anti-discrimination law might remove their rights to employ Christians in key posts in 2000 proved unfounded when the Government confirmed its intention to protect the right of church schools, stated in section 60 of the 1998 Education Act, to employ leaders of their own faith in any subject and not just RE (Martin, 2000, p. 3).

The importance of leadership in Catholic schools is stressed in relation to their stated mission by writers such as Grace (1996, 2002) and Sullivan (2000), and the requirements of the role in this respect are such that it is difficult to see a non-Catholic fulfilling them, even if the possibility were



allowed. To a lesser, but still notable, extent, these differences between Anglican and Catholic schools are evident with other teaching staff. Statistics relating to the number of Anglicans who teach in Anglican schools are not published, but it may safely be asserted that a significant majority of staff in Anglican schools are not practising Anglicans. This issue was highlighted in the Dearing Report (2001, pp.49-51), which stated that:

"Although some dioceses report no difficulty in filling vacancies with good teachers who are also practising Christians, that is not the general experience. We have often heard of the dilemma facing governors and headteachers, in seeking to appoint the best teacher, of the choice between candidates who are practising Christians and those who are not. Unless action is taken by the Church to encourage Christians to see teaching as a valued profession and to show by its Actions how it values its Christian teachers, both within and outside Church schools, the long-term prospect is daunting" (ibid., p. 49).

The Dearing Report recommended Anglican Church colleges to continue to develop their Certificate in Church School Studies or Religious Studies within their professional teacher training courses (ibid., p. 51) and the Church itself was urged "to promote teaching as a vocation of equal status to the priesthood" (ibid., p. 50). The significance of this issue was highlighted by Francis (1993c) who reported on research in rural East Anglian Church of England schools which showed that the character of church schools "depends very much on the attitudes and policies of those who actually teach in them" (ibid., p. 375), and that younger teachers were less likely to be favourably disposed towards the church, with only 10% of staff in controlled schools and 37% of staff in aided schools having specifically chosen to work in church schools.

In Catholic schools a majority of teachers are Catholic, although a distinction still needs to be made between practising and non-practising Catholics which is not evident in the statistics. The proportion of Catholic teachers in Catholic schools is, however, slowly declining: between 1978 and 1996 the number of non Catholic teachers increased from 22% to 29% overall, from 34% to 42.5% in the secondary sector and from 9% to 13.1% in the primary sector (Hypher, 1996, p.223 and Gilpin, 2004, p. 12), and it is reasonable to assume that this trend has continued. Arthur (1995, p. 191) reports that a number of senior teachers in Catholic schools, including deputy headteachers, were non-Catholic in a 1990 survey. Furthermore, a revised memorandum from the Catholic bishops, advising school governors on teacher appointments in 1990 abandoned earlier advice to enquire into the background of candidates and not to appoint preferred atheists and agnostics (ibid.). Parallel to these changes has been a huge reduction since the 1960s in the number of priests and members of religious orders teaching in Catholic schools and training teachers (ibid., p. 135 and Grace, 2002, p. 237).

Not only is it likely that the percentage of Catholic teachers will continue to decrease in the future, but Grace (2002) refers to a reducing degree of "spiritual capital" (ibid., p. 237) underpinning the religious strength of Catholic teachers and school leaders, based upon research in 60 Catholic schools. He concludes that:

"There is evidence that many candidates for the headship of Catholic schools in England can now talk confidently about

achievements in test scores and examinations, business planning and budgets, marketing and public relations, but are relatively inarticulate about the spiritual purposes of Catholic schooling. This is a major contradiction in a system of schooling which exists to give the nurture of spirituality a top priority and it demonstrates that the traditional spiritual capital of Catholic school leadership is a declining asset." (ibid., p. 237).

The importance given to the religion and behaviour of teachers in Catholic schools is stated in many writings, for example:

"teachers are a crucial factor in whether the Catholic school achieves its purposes... inspired by an apostolic spirit, they should bear testimony by their lives and their teachings to the one Teacher, who is Christ.... He or she must provide a 'concrete example' of the Catholic concept of the human person..." (McLaughlin, 1996, p.150).

In the face of such expectations, however unrealistic they might seem to be in practice, it is not surprising to read of instances, such as recorded by Arthur (1995, p.157) including dismissal of, or refusal to appoint, teachers who have been divorced and remarried, for example. Such situations are covered in the terms of the contracts issued to the teachers in most Catholic schools, which include the agreement of the teacher "to have regard to the Roman Catholic character of the school and not to do anything in anyway detrimental or prejudicial to the interests of the same" (quoted in Arthur, 1995, p.192).

In all respects, therefore, the requirements and expectations by the governors of Catholic schools of their staff are significantly greater than is the case in Anglican schools. In other matters beyond the scope of this

study, such as the provision of denominational teacher training colleges by the two churches in order to supply suitably trained staff for their schools, the pattern is repeated with much greater importance attached to the Catholic Teachers' Certificate than to its Anglican counterpart, despite the encouragement given to the latter by the Dearing Report (2001, p. 80).

### Admissions policies and their application

In voluntary aided schools, and the very small number of church foundation schools, which were established in 1999 following the abolition of grant maintained status, governing bodies are responsible for the admission of pupils, and in this, as in so many other features of church schools, the differences in the *usual* practices of Anglican and Catholic schools reflect the traditions and aims of the two churches and the role of schools within the mission of each. Indeed, the admissions policies generally followed by Anglican and Catholic schools are central to the aims of each, although parental choice and open enrolment legislation mean that admissions policies cannot now be seen in isolation.

In the case of most, although by no means all, Anglican schools, these policies in practice allow for the admission of pupils from the area surrounding the school, regardless of their religion, thus reflecting the predominant Anglican educational aim of serving the wider local community. Indeed, in the case of voluntary controlled schools, into which category the majority of Anglican schools fall, they are legally obliged to

admit local pupils on the same basis as non-church schools. Chadwick (1994, pp.19-20) reports that a number of studies into admissions policies of Anglican schools confirm that the great majority of aided primary schools, as with controlled schools, place the main emphasis in admissions criteria on the presence of siblings in the school and 'ease of access' to it, but that the great majority of secondary schools, which are frequently oversubscribed, make regular church attendance their first admissions criterion. Thus it would seem that serving the wider local community is the predominant Anglican educational aim only because the great majority of its schools are primary schools, whereas in the Anglican secondary phase most schools exist primarily for the 'domestic' or 'nurture' purpose of educating Anglican children. Perhaps, as Brown (1993) points out, this demonstrates a lesser degree of cohesiveness in Anglican educational policies than in Catholic ones, "but then the particular position of the Church of England as the state church may well indicate that it never sought that type of cohesiveness so essential to... Roman Catholics" (ibid, p.164). It may also reflect the geographical location of many Anglican primary schools in rural areas which, as the only school for an area, could not possibly cater for Anglican children alone.

This is not to suggest, however, that the issue of admissions has been uncontroversial within the Church of England, especially after the House of Bishops' recommendation in January 2002 that all Anglican schools should have at least a proportion of their places available for non-Christian pupils (Dean, 2002, p. 7), a view subsequently incorporated in national guidance

(Church of England Board of Education, 2002). This reflected the traditional 'service' purpose of Anglican schools, restated clearly in the Dearing Report although not as something advocated for every Anglican school by it, but also concerns in Church and Government circles, after the 2001 riots in northern towns and the '9/11' terrorist attacks on the USA, that church schools might be seen as socially divisive. As noted earlier, the 2002 Education Act, at the request of the Church of England, required Anglican schools to have regard to the advice of diocesan boards of education on this matter. The position of the Church was attacked strongly by Peter Shepherd, Headteacher of Canon Slade Church of England High School in Bolton, whose views on current national Anglican admissions policy have already been noted in Chapter 5, who told the Church Times his school would continue to serve only Christian families : "If the diocesan board of education asks us to take children of other faiths or none, we will politely decline" (Holness, 2002a, p. 7). He described the national advice as "politically correct" and stated "the case for the 'service' model of church schools can no longer be made. The way forward is with schools committed to nurturing children of Christian families" (ibid). He gained little open support for his stance, however, with both the Chair of the Board of Education, the Bishop of Blackburn, and its Chief Education Officer, Canon John Hall, rebutting his position strongly (ibid).

In the case of Catholic schools, the great majority of pupils are Catholic, reflecting their central aim of meeting the 'domestic' or 'nurture' needs of the Catholic community, and the resulting reliance on Catholic baptism as

the main admissions criterion. Between 1980 and 1996 the percentage of children in Catholic primary schools who were non-Catholic increased from 5% to 11%, whilst non-Catholic pupils in Catholic secondary schools increased from 3.5% to 17.7% in the same period (Gilpin, 2004, p. 12). This may be in large part a consequence of the general unpopularity of many inner city secondary schools with parents and may reflect the fact that many Catholic secondary schools are located in such areas. The recent report of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales on 'Catholic Secondary Schools in Urban Poverty Areas' (Bishops' Conference, 1997) revealed that 3 of the 25 schools consulted had between 50% and 70% of their pupils who were not Catholic, and that in a further 7 schools in this, admittedly small, sample, between 25% and 49% of pupils were not Catholic (ibid, p.14). Nevertheless, even in the most socially deprived inner city areas, Catholic schools' admissions policies give the highest priority to pupils from Catholic homes although, as noted previously, the 2002 Education Act ended the power used by some Catholic schools under Section 91 of the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act to turn away non-Catholic pupils, even when they had spare places. The repeal of Section 91 was agreed by the Catholic bishops, after no apparent resistance. prior to its inclusion in the Act (Power, 2002).

### **Popularity and Performance**

It is important to note against this background that although the overall numbers of pupils in Anglican and Catholic schools shown in Table 3 has

fallen since 1974 (DES, 1975 and DfES, 2002), the total number of pupils in each sector, as a percentage of all pupils in English primary and secondary schools, has risen:

TABLE 3 - SCHOOL ADMISSIONS, BY SECTOR, 1974-2002

	<u>1974</u>	<u>2002</u>
Pupils in Anglican Primary and secondary schools	968,187 (10.9%)	926,978 (12.4%)
Pupils in Catholic Primary and secondary schools	795,332 (9.0%)	718,110 (9.6%)
Pupils in all other primary and secondary schools	7,106,770 (80.1%)	5,833.190 (78%)
TOTAL	8,870,289	7,478,278

The comparative increase in the popularity of Anglican and Catholic schools during the last quarter of the 20th Century, a period of great secularisation in English society, clearly cannot be the consequence of any direct religious influences. A number of factors have been suggested as explaining this, including the perception by parents that church schools offer:

"something extra besides the level of religious instruction... a higher standard of dedication amongst the staff, a higher standard of discipline... and that indefinable something extra... that will act as a guide through the difficult years of adolescence" (Chadwick, 1994, p.19).



This 'something extra' also includes the academic success of church schools, although a recent MORI poll shows only 10% of church school supporters regarding this as a main reason for their popularity, compared with 12% citing 'mixing with children from similar backgrounds', 15% 'reputation', 17% 'quality of teaching', 28% 'religious ethos', 29% 'good discipline' and 35% 'same values/beliefs as a child's family' (Passmore and Barnard, 2001, op. cit). This is perhaps surprising, as a popular image exists of church schools being heavily oversubscribed because of middle class parents wanting academic success for their children. Whilst this may be true in some instances, especially at secondary level, this evidence suggests it may be a misleading picture, but perhaps one for which the churches and their schools are themselves partly responsible, in view of the great publicity they, amongst others, give to their academic success. This is highlighted on a regular basis, especially when secondary exam results are published each summer, by the Anglican and Catholic press under headlines such as "Our schools top OFSTED table for second year" in the *Catholic Universe* (Hollyman, 2001) and 'School success story continues' in the *Anglican Church Times* (Holness, 2001 c), whilst the academic success of Anglican secondary schools was also given prominence by the Dearing Report (op. cit. pp. 87-88).

Church schools may deserve their strong academic reputation, but there has been surprisingly little detailed research on the subject until recently, with schools' success judged largely on 'raw' results that take no account of pupils' home background or prior attainment. A study by Marks (2001)

shows pupils at church schools performing in National Curriculum tests ahead of pupils at community schools by, on average, 3 months of progress at age 7, 6 months at age 11, between 6 and 10 months at age 14, and up to 20 percent better on points scores at GCSE, although little different at 'A' level (ibid, pp. 15-16). He also found, however, that "this performance is overshadowed by the staggeringly large variations in average standards between [church] schools" (ibid., p. 27), although his study took no proper account of prior attainment of pupils. In 2002 the National Foundation for Educational Research published a study of the performance of specialist and faith schools at Key Stage 3 and GCSE, using a value added analysis of pupil performance, which concluded that church schools "outperform non-religious schools on some measures, but only to a very slight degree" (Schagen, S., et. al., 2002, p. 34).

An unpublished report on 'Faith Schools' by Ofsted (2001) concluded that, when church schools were benchmarked against other schools, taking account of free school meal eligibility, attainment at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 was better in Catholic schools than Anglican schools, and better in both than in other schools, although there appeared to be very little difference between Anglican voluntary controlled schools and community schools, whilst attainment at 'A' level in the Catholic sector was lower than that of Anglican or other schools (ibid., p. 1). This was, however, based on attainment by a limited sample of schools from a single year, 1999/2000, and was not considered reliable enough to publish. However, the report also showed that, based upon inspections over a five year period, the quality of

teaching in church schools was judged better than in other schools, with Catholic schools marginally better than Anglican ones in this respect, whilst pupils behaviour and provision for their spiritual development “is very much stronger in church schools than non-church schools, especially in the secondary phase” (ibid, p. 2). The report also highlighted significant differences in the socio-economic background of pupils in church schools, as measured by percentage of pupils with free school meal entitlement (ibid, pp. 8-9)”.

Table 4 - Free school meals entitlement for pupils 1999-2000

	<u>Catholic</u>	<u>CE (Aided)</u>	<u>CE (Controlled)</u>	<u>Other Schools</u>	<u>All Schools</u>
Primary	18.4	12.5	10.3	20.8	19.7
Secondary	18.3	14.2	12.5	18.6	17.8

This report, despite its limitations, confirms an earlier analysis of Ofsted inspection reports on Catholic schools during 1993-5 (Morris, 1998), although considerable caution must be applied regarding the objectivity of Ofsted and National Curriculum data on which this research depends. Notwithstanding this, it demonstrates the need to view the performance of church schools in context, especially in the case of Anglican schools with their more socio-economically advantaged intakes and intense competition for places at secondary level with 160 applicants for every 100 places nationally (Dearing, Op. cit, p. xi).

The comparative popularity and academic success of church schools, however, contributes to a perception by many, both within the churches and outside them, that such schools can be socially divisive and therefore damaging to the 'inclusive' message of Christianity, particularly in racially mixed areas. This view is misleading, as many schools in both the Anglican and Catholic systems contain pupils from the most disadvantaged socio-economic groups in proportion to the local communities in which they are located.

Both churches have also worked hard to address the issue posed for their schools by the multicultural nature of society in general and of their own church memberships as described by Chadwick (1994, p.47-49), Francis and Lankshear (1993, pp.84-128). Furthermore, there are many Anglican primary schools where children from other faiths, especially Muslim children, are a significant proportion of the school population, and of the 23 inner city Catholic secondary schools surveyed by the Bishops' Conference (1997, p.15), 5 had more than 10% of their pupils from the Hindu, Sikh or Muslim faiths. Some diocesan authorities have made considerable efforts in producing high quality guidance on multicultural education for their schools, for example Southwark Church of England Diocese (1994 and 2000). Nevertheless, O'Keeffe (1992, pp. 42-3) and Grace (2002, pp. 105-6) claim that Catholic schools have been slow to come to terms with multiculturalism and anti racism, whilst a 2003 study published by the Catholic Education Service (CES, 2003b) claimed that "a quarter of ethnic minority pupils say

they have suffered racism and prejudice in Catholic schools”, whilst “only 43 percent of pupils from ethnic minorities said that they felt at home in a Catholic school; nearly one in five said they did not” (Clark, 2003, p. 6).

Whilst this presents only part of a much wider picture, it cannot be denied that some church schools located in socially and racially mixed urban areas do draw most of their pupils from white, middle class Christian families. As noted earlier, two such Anglican secondary schools in Oldham were accused by some of increasing racial divisions in the town at the time of the 2001 riots, although subsequently shown to be part of a much wider schooling problem by the Cattle Review with a similar conclusion being reached in the case of the 2001 Bradford riots by the Ouseley Report. (Holness, 2001c, op. cit). The example of St. Philip's Catholic Sixth Form College in Birmingham, which its trustees attempted to close in 1992, despite its success as an institution, because only 30% of the students were Catholic, provides a further and different, but not unique, example of what many critics of church schools see as a divisive system at work.

### **The effects of change and convergence at a school level**

It may be argued that many of the changes of recent decades in Anglican and Catholic schools have brought them closer together in the ways that

they function.

Within the Anglican system, the significant recent attempts to strengthen the distinctiveness of Anglican schools, aiming to make them explicitly more Christian institutions, albeit within the tradition of the Church of England, will arguably have brought them closer to the Catholic model, itself based upon an explicitly Christian ethos. The Dearing Report (2001) accepted that a minority of Anglican schools had lost their distinctiveness (ibid, p. 10) but went on to state:

"If the Church has a calling to participate in education, then it must be in a bold and decisive manner, not seeking to impose its faith but offering it as a gift to be experienced through the enjoyment pupils have in working in a community where Christian principles are practised" (ibid, p. 15).

The Dearing Report devoted a whole chapter to the issue of developing distinctiveness in Anglican schools (ibid, Chapter 4, pp. 19-33), and much has been done since then by the Church nationally and in its dioceses to develop a rigorous inspection process for the Christian character of Anglican schools. This has included work to produce a national framework for 'Section 23' inspections (National Society, 2004), to run parallel to 'Section 10' Ofsted inspections, whilst many dioceses have developed frameworks for self-evaluation by Church schools to compliment this, for example the one produced by Manchester Diocesan Board of Education (2003).

Whilst Anglican schools may in many cases change further as a consequence of these actions, even greater changes have already

occurred within the Catholic sector. Arthur (1995) identifies three models of Catholic schools, the last two of which have emerged since 'Vatican II', weakening the integrity of the Catholic system:

"The 'Holistic' model views educational activities in a Catholic school as aspects of a whole and seeks to provide a clear set of educational principles and policies. In the 'dualistic' model there is no real attempt to derive these principles from an elaborate Christian theological position and so the dualistic model substantially prepare the ground for the 'pluralistic' model (which) seeks co-operation in education between people of different beliefs, without any explicit appeal to specifically Catholic principles" (ibid, p. 246)

Grace refers to Arthur's thesis as "provocative" (op. cit, p. 100), considering his argument to be "based upon a spurious 'golden age' construct of the Catholic schools of the past and a too pessimistic reading of the different terms which Catholicity could take in contemporary schooling" (Grace, 2002, p. 101). Sullivan (2001) agrees in part with Arthur's thesis that the Catholic dimension in Catholic schools has been weakened by, for example, "inadequate attention to mission statements, by a patchy and unconvincing use of professional development days to address issues of ethos and by a failure to permeate the curriculum with Catholic principles" (ibid, p. 38), but points out that the bishops have in recent years issued many guidance documents for Catholic schools, even though teachers are not always aware of these and other resources.

Despite the comparative lack of research (Arthur, op. cit, p. 255) the available evidence appears to show that it is the 'holistic' model that still

remains dominant in English Catholic schools. A 1996 survey of Catholic headteachers shows that "the predominant view was that the special mission of Catholic schools was expressed in three inter-related features, i.e. Gospel values, the teachings of Christ and the nature of [Catholic] community" (Grace, 1996, p. 74). This reflects 'official' Catholic theological justification for Catholic education, an example of which states that "the specific mission of the school is critical, systematic transmission of culture in the light of faith and the bringing forth of the power of Christian values by the integration of culture with faith and of faith with living." (Sacred Congregation, 1977, para 49). Nevertheless, care should be taken to avoid stereotyping all Catholic schools, some of which do provide a significant number of places for non-Catholic children, even though such schools remain a minority in the system as a whole. In this respect, the Catholic system certainly remains less diverse than its Anglican counterpart, but comparisons between the two systems must take account of the fact that neither conform to a single model that is uniquely its own.

A clear case can be made that these changes reflect the way in which the traditions and characteristics of each church have influenced their school systems as they adapted to the contemporary secular world. For the Anglican system, which has traditionally served the wider community, it could be argued that secularisation has had significantly less impact than on the Catholic system: most Anglican schools have traditionally educated many non-Anglicans and non-Christians. In comparison, the effect of secularisation on the Catholic system, which has traditionally educated



children from within the Catholic community, has inevitably presented huge challenges as its schools have in recent decades adjusted to a very different pupil base, much of which is now at best 'nominally' Catholic (Baty, 2000, pp. 65-69 and Grace, 2002, p. 101).

These trends clearly provide significant evidence of convergence between the Anglican and Catholic systems. Mostly this is the result of changes in Catholic schools as the effects of secularisation are increasingly felt and as schools in areas of declining population admit non-Catholic pupils in growing numbers to remain viable. The effect of the 2002 Education Act, requiring even the most popular Catholic schools to admit non-Catholic pupils if they have empty places, has yet to be seen, but can only serve to reinforce this trend, bringing Catholic schools in many areas closer to the Anglican model, despite a recent revision of canon law by the Vatican reaffirming the central aim of Catholic schools as being the provision of a "Catholic education for all Catholic children" (Chadwick, 1997, p. 69). For its part, the Church of England's formal validation in the Dearing Report of the 'nurture' purpose for its schools, alongside the more traditional 'service' purpose, in sharp contrast to the official position recommended in the 1970 Durham Report which advocated only the latter purpose, may also be seen as moving the Anglican system towards a 'centre ground' which is closer to the traditional Catholic position. This is reinforced by the increased popularity of Anglican schools which makes it more difficult for children from non-Christian homes to gain admission to some of them. This view is confirmed by Francis (2000) who sees the effect of such changes as being "... to move the Anglican view

of church schools into closer sympathy with the Roman Catholic view (ibid, p. 118).

These changes at the school level, often but not always the results of strategic policy decisions by the two churches - clear evidence of 'policy as discourse' identified by Ball (1994) - confirm the picture of convergence between the Anglican and Catholic systems already identified at the strategic policy making level. The creation of joint Anglican/Catholic schools provides a visible symbol of convergence, although they are merely the outward sign of more fundamental, if often unseen, changes that run throughout both school systems which, intended or not, are bringing them closer together.

### **Joint Anglican-Catholic Schools**

The existence of a small but growing number of joint Anglican/Catholic schools was noted in the previous chapter, as was the fact that they tended to be the result of pragmatic solutions to particular local problems rather than the consequence of ecumenical idealism at a national or diocesan policy making level. The evidence from individual joint schools, insofar as it exists in published form, tends to support this general view, although the case study of Church schools in Liverpool in the next section of this work suggests that one of the three joint Anglican/Catholic schools in the city was established for idealistic reasons. The small number of these schools, however, together with the differing origins of each and the lack of detailed

information on all but two of them, makes any analysis difficult, especially as they have met with varying degrees of success.

Furthermore, no single model of joint schools seems to have emerged, especially in the key areas of Religious Education and pupil admissions arrangements, reflecting perhaps the fact that such schools arise in particular local circumstances and therefore have locally agreed characteristics. These vary in the case of Religious Education from the adoption of the existing Catholic syllabus, as at St Augustine of Canterbury School in Oxford, to an arrangement at St Bede's School, Redhill, which at Key Stage 3 provides one lesson a fortnight to denominational groups and a common programme to denominationally mixed groups for the other RE lessons, with a common GCSE course followed at Key Stage 4 (St Bede's Prospectus, 2003, p. 5). According to Chadwick (1999, p. 13) research in the 1980s and 90s showed that joint schools had generally avoided adopting the lowest common denominator in RE and worship, and her account of the development of the St Bede's, Redhill, programme (Chadwick, 1994, pp 74-90) illustrates the lengths to which that school in particular went to ensure that the matter was properly dealt with.

Likewise, practice varies regarding pupil admissions, with some schools granting admission to Anglican and Catholic children as their top priority in the event of oversubscription (St Michael's High School, Barnsley, Admission Policy 2004-2005, p. 3), whilst others give priority to local children for up to 50% of places (Kensington Academy, Liverpool, Admissions arrangements,

2003, pp. 3-4). St Bede's School, Redhill, also gives priority to children from the Free Churches alongside Anglican and Catholic pupils in the event of oversubscription (Chadwick, 1994, p. 101). In practice, the pattern of admissions to joint schools varies greatly, especially if the schools are not oversubscribed (Holness, 2000, p. 13).

The first joint school, St Cuthbert Mayne's Torquay was established in the mid-1970's when a former Catholic secondary school changed status to admit Anglican as well as Catholic pupils. It is considered to be successful, has grown as a result of its popularity, and is supported strongly by the Anglican Diocese of Exeter and the Catholic Diocese of Plymouth (Holness, 2000b, p. 13). The history of a second joint school, St Bede's, Redhill, which was established shortly afterwards in 1976 from the amalgamation of a Catholic mixed comprehensive school and an Anglican girls secondary modern school, has been recorded in great detail by Chadwick (1994). It too has proved highly successful in terms of popularity with parents, although the detailed analysis of its development shows that this was not without some difficulties, especially in the area of Religious Education (ibid). Other joint schools, primary and secondary, established in Chelmsford, Liverpool, Sunderland and Cambridge, with a joint sixth form established to serve an Anglican school and a Catholic school in Harrogate, all appear to have been successful (Chadwick, 1999, p. 13), but there have also been some failures.

During the 1990's a joint primary school in the North-East closed because of

declining pupil numbers in the area it served, whilst a joint secondary school in Richmond closed because it had failed to win support from the local Catholic community and was replaced by an Anglican school. The closure of St Augustine of Canterbury joint upper school, Oxford, in 2003, after several years of very public disagreement between the Anglican Diocese of Oxford which wished to retain the school, and the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham which wished to replace it with a Catholic secondary school, received widespread coverage in the Church and educational press and has been written about in some detail by the former Head Teacher, Elisabeth Gilpin (2004) in only the second analysis of an individual joint school to be published. The occasion for the closure of St Augustine's was provided by an LEA reorganisation of Oxford schools in which a three tier system involving middle schools was replaced by a two tier primary/secondary system, which the Catholic authorities believed would allow the creation of a viable Catholic secondary school in the city. This was opposed by the Anglican diocese, which faced the loss of Anglican secondary provision in the city if the school, sited on Catholic owned land were to change status.

There is, however, significant evidence that the closure of St Augustine of Canterbury School also reflected a view within the Catholic authorities that the school was not Catholic enough, with some observers even suggesting that this judgement had been partly influenced by the school's Catholic chaplain, a former Anglican priest (Holness, 2000b, *op. cit.*). This view is endorsed by Gilpin (*op. cit.*, pp. 14-17) who quotes the argument given by

Archbishop Vincent Nichols in 2000 for the school's closure:

"In coming to my decision I have thought hard about the ecumenical duties that are so much part of the Catholic faith and how they can best be fulfilled. My commitment to the search for the visible unity of all Christians is firm, and I hope is that of every Catholic. But I am very aware that this search requires, as a starting point, a firm and clear faith in the Church of which one is a member. For Catholics, this faith is the basis of respect for truth and for other expressions of Christian faith, and indeed for other faiths" (quoted in Gilpin, 2004, p. 16).

According to Holness (2000b, op. cit.) the school drew many pupils from socially disadvantaged areas of the city whose church affiliation was nominal or non-existent which "is consistent with the Anglican model of a Church school, but for Roman Catholic traditionalists in the Archdiocese it is uncomfortable" (ibid, p. 13). Whatever the true significance of the school's Catholicity amongst the reasons for its closure, against strong opposition from not only the Anglican authorities but also the governing body, local councillors and the majority of parents, students and staff (Gilpin, op. cit. p.15), there are important lessons to be learnt by other joint schools from these events. It is clear, for example, that the issue of Catholic identity also cause significant problems at St Bede's School in Cambridge, where at one point the portion of Catholic pupils fell as low as 25%. In this instance the issues were addressed by the appointment of Catholics to three senior posts in the school and an improvement in academic performance, as a result of which the proportion of Catholic pupils rose to more than 40% (Holness, op. cit., p. 13).

However, whilst the events surrounding the St Augustine of Canterbury School's closure in Oxford and the threat to St Bede's School, Cambridge, demonstrate the possible vulnerability of joint schools, their existence and in many cases their apparent success, provides clear evidence of the extent to which the Anglican and Catholic school systems have moved closer together. Chadwick (1994, pp. 203-204) cites the strong support of local churches and their dioceses, the full commitment of staff and their willingness to work through difficulties without 'fudging' , together with a commitment to engage in genuine and frank dialogue, as having been essential to the success of St Bede's School, Redhill: an approach that clearly has implications for all joint schools and stands in contrast to that advocated by Sedgwick (1992, pp. 257-259) who suggests that 'ecumenical' schools should distance themselves from the denominations which sponsor them, a view not supported by events, particularly in Oxford.

### Effectiveness in Mission

This Chapter has examined the ways in which the policies of the Church of England and the Catholic Church have been implemented in their schools and the 'policy outcomes' that have resulted. This has included reference to the effectiveness of church schools in broad educational terms, as measured by DfES league tables, Ofsted judgements and parental perceptions, but as yet no reference has been made to the effectiveness of

church schools in achieving, in religious terms, the mission given them by the churches. 'Mission' in its broadest sense, exemplified by the Anglican aim of service to the wider community, as defined in the Dearing Report (2001) and many reports preceding this, is a difficult thing to quantify, let alone evaluate. More specifically, however, it has been noted that the main aim of Catholic schools and of many Anglican schools is the nurture of young people in the Christian faith. Indeed, all Anglican schools, regardless of whether their main purpose is one of service or nurture, are required by the Dearing Report to, in the words of the late Archbishop Runcie, "nourish those of the faith; encourage those of other faiths; challenge those who have no faith" (ibid., p. 4).

It is therefore surprising, in view of the size of the Anglican and Catholic schools systems and the commitment of the churches to them, not least in terms of resources, that there is comparatively little evidence available on the effectiveness of church schools in this key area of their work. It is quite true that the ways in which church schools function in order to deliver their Christian mission as effectively as possible has been the subject of many official reports, most recently the Dearing Report (2001) on Anglican schools and various reports on Catholic schools by the Catholic Bishops' Conference (1997a, 1997b, 1998), as has been described in detail earlier in this study. Likewise, the views of many church leaders and educationalists on the effectiveness on church schools have been referred to already, for example Carey, Hope and Hall (1998), Lankshear and Hall (2003) on Anglican schools, and Kelly (1987) and Hume (1990, 1994 and 1995) on Catholic schools. As



with official reports, however, all of these tend to deal either with the way in which church schools function as Christian institutions or with the religious aims of the schools, accepting almost as an act of faith that church schools will have an impact on the spiritual and religious development of their pupils.

Such views have not gone unchallenged within the churches, although these challenges owe more to philosophical positions in most cases than to research. Indeed, much of the opposition within the churches is not based upon issues of their effectiveness in Christian mission, but on their perceived divisiveness in a pluralistic society, particularly in an ecumenical age, and to the "time, effort and money that might better be spent in other ways" (Arthur, 1995, p. 247).

Evidence on some aspects of church schools' effectiveness in this area of their work exists in Ofsted inspection reports and the accompanying Section 23 reports of denominational inspectors. These can, of course, vary in quality, but at their best can only comment on the effectiveness of church schools as institutions seeking to fulfil their Christian mission. They say much about mission statements, the faith leadership of headteachers, the quality of collective worship, the quality of Religious Education, the resources available to support the religious life of the school and give judgements on the nature of the Anglican or Catholic ethos that has been created there. Such reports cannot, however, assess objectively the positive impact on the religiosity of pupils, as reflected by, for example,

their views on Christianity, moral values and religious values. Even in this area, however, surprisingly little research appears to have been undertaken on the findings of these reports on church schools, although Grace (2002, pp. 211-215) summarises the inspection findings on sixteen Catholic schools, whilst the Culham College Institute has undertaken, but not yet published, research on inspection reports on Anglican schools.

Empirical research undertaken on the religious beliefs, religious values and moral values of the young people attending church schools in Britain is limited, and is summarised by Francis (2005, pp. 128-132), himself responsible for much of the work in this field. Much of it was, however, undertaken in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s and cannot properly be regarded as illustrating a contemporary situation. More recently, Francis and Egan (1993) describe research on pupils attending a number of Catholic schools in England, finding that non-Catholic pupils, even if they came from church going families from other denominations, were less sympathetic towards Christianity than Catholic pupils, although "this might well be a function of the incompatibility between their own religious backgrounds and the doctrinal, liturgical and catechetical assumptions of the school" (*ibid.*, p. 431). They also refer to a study of attitudes amongst pupils in Catholic schools in Wales which demonstrated that the most serious disaffection with Catholic schools was to be found amongst non-practising Catholic pupils rather than non-Catholic pupils. This picture seems to have been confirmed for English Catholic secondary schools by Francis (2002), showing their most positive effect in terms of moral values to be on practising Catholic pupils,

with a negative effect on lapsed Catholic pupils, compared with pupils in secular schools. He found similar results in terms of religious values, although lapsed Catholic pupils recorded similar scores to pupils in secular schools (ibid.).

Rhymer and Francis (1993) report on the attitudes of Catholic secondary pupils in Scotland towards religion, concluding that whilst the sex, social class, age and level of religious practice of pupils are all significant predictors of attitude towards religion, this attitude was more positive amongst the Catholic pupils attending Catholic schools or receiving denominational Religious Education in non-denominational schools (a feature of the Scottish system) than amongst Catholic pupils receiving no form of denominational education.

Francis and Lankshear (1993) describe the impact of Anglican primary schools on village life, drawing on evidence collected from Anglican churches in twenty four English dioceses during 1988. This showed that church schools "do have a significant, if small, impact on certain key measures of village life" (ibid., p. 484), in particular with regard to church contact with children between the ages of 6-9 and adults over the age of 21, membership of church choirs and numbers of baptisms and confirmations. This countered an earlier study (Francis, 1986) which actually showed Anglican schools having a small negative effect on their pupils' attitudes towards Christianity in research undertaken in the preceding decade.

Research on the religious effectiveness of Anglican secondary schools is also limited. Most recently, Lankshear (2002b, quoted in Francis, 2005, p. 132) using evidence collected nationally on teenagers' beliefs and values, has concluded that practising Anglican pupils attending Anglican schools have stronger religious values than Anglicans attending secular schools, with comparable levels of moral values, but that there was no recognisable difference in religious values between non-Anglicans attending Anglican and secular schools. Non-Anglicans recorded lower levels of moral values if they attended Anglican schools than their counterparts in secular schools. A more limited study by Francis and Jewell (1992), involving only one Anglican school and four secular schools in the same town, found that the Anglican school "exerted neither a positive nor a negative influence on its pupils' religious practice, belief or attitude" (Francis, 2005, p. 131).

The comparative lack of research into this aspect of the effectiveness of church schools in England is commented upon by Arthur (1995, p. 255), Grace (2002, p. 99) and Francis (2005, p. 128), the view of Grace being that this is in large part explained by the absence of a Church-based higher education system with a significant research culture. This is in contrast to the extent of research available elsewhere, primarily concerning the effectiveness of Catholic schools in the USA and, to a lesser extent, Australia, the development of which is outlined by Grace (*ibid.*, pp. 80-99). He traces the development of 'foundational' research into the impact of Catholic schools on the Catholicity of their pupils, which at first during the 1960s suggested a marginal impact only. However, the work of Greeley

(1976, 1998) using a wider sample of Catholic pupils and refined statistical analysis concluded that Catholic schools did influence the religious behaviour of their pupils in later adult life, especially as American society became more secular. Grace also describes the findings of research into the effectiveness of Catholic inner city schools in the USA, explained in part by the safer, more disciplined educational environment and strong sense of community frequently found in such schools (Coleman and Hoffer, 1987).

These findings were confirmed by Bryk et al (1993) who also drew attention to the sense of vocation and mission amongst many school leaders as a contributing factor to the effectiveness of Catholic schools, compared with secular schools serving the same area. From such evidence, it may be concluded that "Catholic schools have an advantage arising from the social capital of being embedded in strong functional communities represented by Church and parish agencies" (Grace, 2002, p. 92). Grace also refers to research undertaken in Australia by Flynn (1985, 1993) which concluded that the religious impact of Catholic schools on children from practising Catholic families was significant, but the effect was declining in the face of increasing secularisation.

It would be convenient to believe that such findings could be transferred easily to an English setting, but the extent of cultural differences, even between English speaking societies in the USA, Australia and England, make this difficult. Nevertheless, it might reasonably be supposed that some findings of American and Australian research would be confirmed by similar

research in English Catholic schools. It is, however, most doubtful that any assumptions could be made about the effectiveness of Anglican schools in England on the basis of this research, in view of the different cultural settings in which they operate.

The absence of a large volume of evidence of the effectiveness of English church schools in their Christian mission is a major gap in any understanding of policy outcomes in this field and there is no certainty that it will be filled in the immediate future, despite the establishment of a collaborative research institute by the Church of England, the University of Gloucestershire, St Martin's College, Lancaster and Canterbury Christ Church University in 2005, the National Institute for Christian Education Research (Arthur, 2005), with James Arthur as Director.

This Chapter has focused on the interpretation, implementation and outcomes of Catholic and Church of England policy within their contemporary school systems. Together with the two previous chapters, it has analysed the churches' policy towards their schools, together with the wider context of influence in which they operate. In the chapters that follow, attention is turned to a case study of the Catholic and Church of England schools systems in the city of Liverpool, in order to illustrate in greater detail a number of the earlier findings of this study.

## **PART 3**

### **CHURCH SCHOOLS - A CASE STUDY OF POLICY PRODUCTION, IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES IN THE CITY OF LIVERPOOL**

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **THE LOCAL CONTEXT OF INFLUENCE**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this case study is to explore in greater detail a number of the key aspects of this subject, to provide examples of the relationship between Anglican and Catholic school systems in one place and to illustrate further the complexity of policy making, implementation and outcomes. A case study such as this cannot, by its focus on a single local authority area, claim either to prove or disprove findings arising from the study of national systems, as each local area has its own distinctive characteristics which may distort the national picture. Findings from a local case study can, however, add to the understanding of the national picture.

The conceptual framework used for analysis of the national church school systems, based upon the works of Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992), Ball (1994) and Robinsohn (1992) and illustrated in Figure 2 of Chapter 2, is also used in this case study through chapters on the local context of influence, the local strategic context and the local schools context.

Patterns of school provision vary greatly between dioceses in both churches and the findings of any case study must therefore take full account of the particular local context of influence, which is the subject of the rest of this



chapter and which adds to rather than replaces the wider context of influence identified earlier in Chapter 3.

### The City of Liverpool

As with most large English cities, modern Liverpool is essentially a product of the Industrial Revolution, although it had been a port from Norman times under a royal charter since 1207. When granted city status in 1880, it had a population of approximately 500,000, twelve times its size a hundred years earlier. (Morley, 1989, p. 6). This rose to approximately 850,000 in 1931 before declining significantly from 790,000 in 1951 to about 458,000 residents in 2001 (Liverpool City Council, 2003b, Appendix 5). Like other cities it experienced great social problems even at the time of its greatest affluence, although its economic decline from the 1960s, which has been well documented as more extreme than other cities with perhaps greater social consequences.

Liverpool's history as a major port and its close links with North America and Ireland had other significant consequences. During the 19<sup>th</sup> Century in particular, large numbers of Irish immigrants came to the city, some intending to stay but most en-route to the USA, and some intending to cross the Atlantic but, for a variety of reasons, going no further than Liverpool. At the height of this immigration, during the Irish Famine, in 1847 alone, 300,000 Irish people landed in Liverpool (Chandler, 1957, p. 409). Those who stayed in the city were the ancestors of a large part of its present

population and provided a significant part of its cultural and religious heritage, to a much greater extent than in any other English city, in a way that also had a major effect on the city's education system. Conversely, the proportion of the city's population from minority ethnic backgrounds is in line with national averages (Ofsted, 2003, p. 4) and therefore well below the proportion in many other cities.

### The Local Religious Context

In view of the subject of this study, the focus of this section is, inevitably the Christian communities, specifically the Anglican and Catholic churches, in Liverpool. It would be wrong to suggest, however, that other faiths are not represented in the city, even if their members are a smaller proportion of the population than in many other English cities. In the 2001 Census, only 2.6% of Liverpool's population belonged to non-Christian religions, whereas 79.5% claimed to be Christian (Liverpool City Council, 2003, p. 3). In particular, there is a small, but long standing Liverpool Jewish population and a small but growing Muslim population which has increased in recent decades, not least as a result of the arrival in the 1990s of refugees from Somalia. Both these faith groups have an impact on the cultural life of the city, including education: the Jewish community is served by the King David voluntary aided primary and secondary schools, whilst the Muslim community's influence is felt significantly in a number of Liverpool schools, including some Anglican and Catholic ones. Issues relating to this will be examined in some detail in Chapter 9. It is, however, the relationship

between the Catholic and Protestant (including the Church of England) communities which has most shaped the religious history of the city and which has, especially in the case of the Catholic Church, had a major influence on the pattern of Liverpool school provision.

It is important to note at the outset that the Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool and Church of England Diocese of Liverpool cover significantly more than the city, each including a broadly similar area including all or part of seven other local authorities and in the case of the Archdiocese, the Isle of Man also. Amongst these are the large towns of St Helens and Southport, together with the larger parts of Warrington and Wigan and the 'new towns' of Kirkby and Skelmersdale. Only 53 of the Catholic Archdiocese's 206 parish churches (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2003a, p. 160) and 64 of the 250 parishes of the Anglican Diocese (Diocese of Liverpool, 2004a, pp. 37-1170) are in the city. Nevertheless, each diocese is centered on Liverpool, in which both their cathedrals were built and in which their diocesan offices are located. It should be noted here that the term 'Archdiocese' is the formal title used for a Catholic diocese led by an archbishop, and does not refer to the wider groups of dioceses for which he is also responsible.

However, whilst the Church of England and Free Church presence in Liverpool is fairly typical of other English cities outside London, the Catholic presence in the city is very considerable, reflecting the fact that the Archdiocese as a whole has long been the largest diocese in terms of

Catholic population, in the country (Sheppard and Worlock, op cit, p. 60). This is mainly due to the Irish origins of so many of its inhabitants and even today approximately 143,000 people, 31% of the city's population, are baptised Catholics (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2003a, pp54-71). Whilst this does not mean that all these people are active members of their Church, it will be shown in this case study to continue to have a major impact on the city's educational provision.

Much of Liverpool's 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century history was marked by sectarian divisions between Protestants and Catholics, not least because a significant minority of Irish immigrants in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century were Protestants who settled in areas of the city close to the main Catholic areas. The first Orange Lodge in Liverpool was formed in 1807, whilst in the Irish Famine years in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century, "the native-born section of the community looked down in fear and threat from Everton Brow on what they saw as an 'alien green flood', sweeping in to take whatever employment existed" (Sheppard and Worlock, op. cit, p. 53). A Protestant Party was founded in 1903 and existed in partnership with the local Conservative Party until 1972 whilst a 'Catholic Party' briefly existed in the 1920s until Archbishop Downey in 1928 forbade the use of the word 'Catholic' in any political party. Violent clashes, including near sectarian civil war in 1909, continued into the 1960s: (ibid, pp 52-56). Amongst other things, this sectarianism was fuelled by the issue of denominational schooling, characterised by some as 'Rome on the rates', whilst the annual marches of the Orange Lodge and Catholic processions in areas bordering their rival communities frequently

led to trouble (ibid., p. 55).

Against this background, the twenty year partnership between David Sheppard, appointed Anglican Bishop of Liverpool in 1975, and Derek Worlock, appointed in 1976 as Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, together with Free church leaders in the city, became “nationally - and indeed internationally - famous [as] Liverpool ... now finds itself at the forefront of practical ecumenism” (Davie, 1994, p. 163). Much of their success was undoubtedly due to the transformation in ecumenical relations nationally, and a survey of Catholic Liverpool in 1969 had “found that intolerance and prejudice have disappeared to an unbelievable extent and the whole attitude between Catholics and Protestants has now changed”. (Hastings, 1987, p. 569). Nevertheless, the importance of the Sheppard-Worlock partnership in breaking-down the old divisions in Liverpool cannot be overstated and has been well recorded, not least by the two men themselves (Sheppard and Worlock 1988 and Sheppard, 2002, for example).

Nor, despite the national change in the ecumenical climate, was their work unchallenged or popular with every section of the local religious community: a few months before the Pope’s visit to Liverpool in 1982, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, was shouted down by members of the Orange Lodge when preaching in Liverpool Parish Church, and David Sheppard records the fears of the Orange Lodge, expressed at a meeting with him shortly after this event (Sheppard, 2002, p. 182). Such opposition was not limited to sections of the Protestant communities. Sewell (2001) records an

article written in the Catholic Herald in May 1996 by Alice Thomas Ellis, criticising strongly what she saw as the “misguided” praise in the recent obituaries for Derek Worlock, whom she blamed for the large reduction in mass attendance in Liverpool during his time as Archbishop. She was sacked as a columnist by the paper, which printed an apology in its next issue, following protests from dozens of priests in Liverpool, but she undoubtedly represented a view shared by some other Catholics. Despite such criticisms from both ‘sides’, the Sheppard-Worlock years in Liverpool saw huge changes in the religious life of the city, work that was publicly validated by the successful visit of Pope John Paul in 1982. Their success was seen not least in the field of education, where the amalgamation of two Anglican and Catholic higher education colleges led ultimately to the establishment of the joint Anglican/Catholic Liverpool Hope University College, described by Elford (2003), whilst the opening of the joint Anglican/Catholic Emmaus Primary School in 1997 will be described later in this case study.

The effect of these ecumenical developments in Liverpool since the 1970s must, of course, be seen alongside the effects of secularisation, which has led to a significant decline in active membership of all mainstream churches in the city. Within the Anglican Diocese of Liverpool as a whole, the average Sunday attendance at a church by people aged 16 and over has fallen from 31,000 in 1986 (Sheppard and Worlock, *op. cit.*, p. 60) to 18,458 in 2002 (Diocese of Liverpool, 2002a, p6). A similar note of decline has occurred in mass attendance across the Catholic Archdiocese, from a figure of approximately 185,000 in 1988 (Sheppard and Worlock, *op. cit.*, p. 60),

although precise figures are not available for the most recent years. Numerically the effect on the Catholic Church in Liverpool, which has experienced decline in church attendance from a much higher base than other denominations has been the most dramatic, with a disproportionate decline in many inner-city parishes exacerbated by depopulation and housing clearances. Between the 1950s and 1970s, for example, the great Jesuit parish of St Frances Xavier saw its Catholic population fall from 13,000 to 900 (*ibid.*, p. 44). Parallel to this, the Catholic Archdiocese has seen a huge drop in the number of its priests, whose average age has risen sharply, with few new priests being trained: in 2002 there were only 165 parish priests for 226 churches, with 18 assistant priests, compared to 1975 when it took an average 25 years for a newly ordained priest to be given his own parish (Sheppard, *op cit*, p. 266). Not surprisingly this and the loss of income from declining congregations have seen the number of Catholic churches in Liverpool drop from 70 to 53 since the 1970s (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2003a, pp 54-71).

Whatever the strength of a number of individual Catholic and Anglican churches in the city, with that of some other Protestant churches, it is undeniable that the recent history of the mainstream churches in Liverpool has been one of significant decline reflecting the national trend. The extent to which this and other equally important changes in the last 30 years have affected the Anglican and Catholic school systems in Liverpool will be examined in the chapters that follow, but it will be seen that the contribution of the churches to education in the city has been, and to a

great extent, remains, massive.

### The Local Educational Context

In common with the rest of England, the development of public education in Liverpool during the 19th Century was largely under the control of the churches, although - unsurprisingly in view of the size of the city's Catholic population - the role played by Catholic schools was much greater than usual. The first half of the century had witnessed a unique partnership, which came to be known as the 'Liverpool experiment', in which two 'Corporation Schools' were established in 1832 by the Town Council which, with the support of the Anglican and Catholic authorities, provided Religious Instruction according to the teachings of the Church of England and following Catholic teaching for Catholic children. The story of this experiment is told by Murphy (1959), but it was short lived, failing in 1842, following strong opposition from the Liverpool Protestant Association and its leader, the Revd H. McNeile and a change in power in the Town Council. Its failure dismayed many, including Local Catholic leaders who as a result began to address seriously the task of providing schools for the greatly increasing Catholic population of Liverpool (ibid, pp. 264-6).

Throughout the rest of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, both churches worked hard to maintain a dominant role in the provision of elementary schools in



Liverpool, even after the 1870 Education Act which established non-denominational Board schools and led to a large increase in pupil numbers, from 42,754 in 1870 to 127,486 in 1900 (Pritchard, 1980, pp. 105-108). However, the proportion of Anglican school places decreased, especially during the inter-war period, partly as the cost of maintaining it increased and partly because of Anglican support for ‘Council’ schools which served children from the same background as Anglican schools (ibid, p. 109) as illustrated below (from ibid, pp. 105-109):

Table 5 - Percentages of pupils in Liverpool elementary schools

	<u>1870</u>	<u>1900</u>	<u>1930</u>
Church of England	45.9%	31.9%	17.5%
Catholic	24.2%	24.5%	29.9%
Board/Council	-	35.0%	52.0%
Other	29.9%	8.6%	0.6%

This trend continued after the 1944 Education Act, when the Anglican diocesan authorities made only limited provision for secondary aged pupils, whilst the Catholic Archdiocese embarked on a school buildings programme aimed at providing a place for every Catholic child of primary and secondary age. This was particularly so when John Heenan was Archbishop, between 1957 and 1963, when a huge level of funding was raised from Liverpool parishes in the belief that the number of Catholic pupils would never fall (Sheppard and Worlock, op. cit, p. 102).

For most of the period following this the population of Liverpool, including those of school age, has fallen, despite a temporary increase in the birth rate in the late 1980s, and the effect has been felt across all sectors in the city's school system. Between 1991 and 2002, for example, the Liverpool birth rate fell by more than 25% and is still predicted to fall, although less sharply (Liverpool City Council, 2003a, p. 12). The effect of this has not been evenly spread, with some areas of the inner city affected particularly badly and also hit by population movements (ibid, pp 41-71). As a consequence, Liverpool LEA with its Anglican and Catholic partners have, between 1989 and 2002 removed 10,650 primary school places and 12,745 secondary school places, closing 8 secondary schools and closing or replacing 54 primary schools (Liverpool City Council, 2000a, p. 4). Prior to this, during the 1980s major secondary school reorganisations had halved the number of Catholic secondary schools in 1983, mainly by amalgamating smaller schools, and greatly reduced the number of county secondary schools in 1985.

Against this background and the wider context of influence analysed earlier in Chapter 3, the following two chapters will examine in greater detail some of the complexities of policy making at the local strategic level in Liverpool and of policy implementation and outcomes in the local schools context.

# **CHAPTER 7**

## **THE LOCAL STRATEGIC CONTEXT**

### **THE CHURCH SCHOOL SYSTEMS IN LIVERPOOL:**

#### **Organisational features of Anglican and Catholic school systems in Liverpool**

Whilst no diocesan school system in either church is exactly the same as another, it is reasonable to suppose that the Archdiocese and Diocese of Liverpool is representative of other Anglican and Catholic systems, insofar as their main features will be found in most other dioceses. The size of the Liverpool Archdiocesan is certainly not typical, but it reflects the proportion of Catholics in the population as a whole and there is no evidence that the schools themselves or the policy making and administrative structures of the Archdiocese, are significantly different to those found in other Catholic dioceses. Although this case study focuses on the operation of the two systems in only one of the LEA areas covered by each diocese, it will be understood that certain aspects of it will inevitably reflect the wider diocesan picture, particularly with regard to policy making and administrative structures. Although only a minority of the schools in each system are to be found in Liverpool, the city is a major part of each system, being the location for the administrative centre of each. A quarter of the Archdiocese's schools are in the city and although the number of Anglican primary schools is no greater than in most other LEAs in the Diocese, 4 of its 8 secondary schools will be in the city after September 2005.

The size and statistical features of the Anglican and Catholic systems in Liverpool LEA, are shown in Table 6, (from Liverpool City Council, 2004c).

Table 6 - Distribution of Pupils in the Maintained Sector in Liverpool, excluding Special Schools, January 2004

<u>Category</u>	<u>Primary Schools</u>	<u>Primary Pupils</u>	<u>Secondary Schools</u>	<u>Secondary Pupils</u>
<u>Church of England</u>				
Voluntary Aided	8*	1,769	3	2,703
Voluntary Controlled	6	1,346	0	0
Total C.E.	14*	3,115 ( 8.6%)	3	2,703 ( 8.1%)
<u>Roman Catholic</u>				
Voluntary Aided	53*	13,497	12	11,866
Foundation	0	0	1	1,340
Total RC	53*	13,497 (37.2%)	13	13,206 (39.4%)
<u>All Other Schools</u>	72	19,655 (54.2%)	16	17,593 (52.5%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>138*</b>	<b>36,267</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>33,502</b>

(\* Includes 1 joint CE/RC school)

It will be seen from this Table that almost half of the city's pupils attend Anglican or Catholic schools, with significantly more in the Catholic sector than the Anglican sector, reflecting the size of the Liverpool Catholic population as a whole and its historical importance in the city's schools

provision. One of the primary schools shown in the statistics is a joint Anglican/Catholic school, although since the statistics were compiled, a second joint school opened in September 2004 and the first joint secondary school will open in September 2005. Within the Anglican system it will be noted that all of the secondary schools and 8 of the 14 primary schools have voluntary aided status, the remainder being voluntary controlled schools, a pattern which is in line with that for the Diocese as a whole. Within the Catholic sector, all but one of the schools have voluntary aided status, with the one Foundation school being the only Catholic school to have that status in the country. Religious Orders are trustees of 9 Catholic schools in the city, including 8 secondary schools (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2003a). All these secondary schools, 2 other Catholic secondaries and the 3 Anglican secondaries are single sex schools, compared with all but 2 of the city's other secondary schools which are co-educational.

A number of other features of the two systems can be seen in the statistics. Table 6 shows the average size of schools in each sector in January 2004. The primary school figures reflect the fact that a majority of Anglican primary schools have one form entry, whilst proportionately more Catholic schools have two forms of entry and a higher proportion again of community schools are two forms of entry. These figures also reflect the fact that many primary schools in the city are not full to their capacity, with one form entry schools more vulnerable to the effects of falling pupil numbers. A similar pattern is also evident on Table 7 in the secondary phase, although the figures are slightly misleading as the three Anglican secondary schools

are heavily over-subscribed, in contrast to the Community sector and to a lesser extent the Catholic sector where numbers have been falling because of demographic trends in recent years, the effects of which will be examined in the next chapter. All three Anglican secondary schools and all but two Catholic secondary schools have sixth form provision.

Table 7 - Average school size by Sector in Liverpool, January 2004

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>Secondary</u>
Church of England	223	901
Roman Catholic	255	989
All Other Schools	273	1,099
City average	263	1,047

#### Strategic Policy Making Frameworks

It has been established in Chapter 4 that whilst much of the formal policy decision making and the production of 'policy texts' relating to church schools is done nationally by the DfES and the churches' own bodies, significant powers remain at diocesan level with the diocesan bishop in the Catholic system and the Diocesan Board of Education in the Anglican system. Whilst practise in the Liverpool situation reflects this, further analysis demonstrates the similar ways in which both dioceses have responded to the increasing demands placed upon them by government and the effects of marketization.

The formal policy bodies of each system in Liverpool inevitably reflects national practise and, in turn, the underlining characteristics of each church. These are hierarchical, clergy dominated and undemocratic in the case of the Catholic system; not fully democratic, committee-based within a clear statutory framework, and semi-independent within diocesan structures in the case of the Anglican system. In both dioceses, however, the involvement at a formal level of headteachers and other representatives from the educational world, for the first time in the Anglican case from 2003, can be seen to reflect the need to involve school based professionals in the formal policy process as the demands made upon schools by the state continue to grow and change. This point is stated explicitly in the report considered by the Anglican Diocesan Board of Education when it established its new committee structure (Diocese of Liverpool, 2003c) and is implicit in Archdiocesan documents (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2003a, 2004a). The role for school representatives may also be seen as providing more than simply an additional source of advice for both dioceses. As church schools have increasingly been given independence through the marketization of education, the concept of 'partnership' between schools and the relevant authorities at a local level, be they LEAs or diocesan bodies, has developed and it may reasonably be supposed that the involvement of school representatives in this way signifies a desire by both dioceses to develop partnerships with their own schools. This has a parallel in the involvement by the City Council of school representatives in various LEA groups, some formal with school involvement required by regulation, others informal.

In Liverpool, as elsewhere, both dioceses are represented on many different groups, often with statutory powers and subject to inspection, and work with the LEA to support schools in carrying out their statutory duties and to raise standards as required by government, whilst the huge increase in capital investment in schools since 1997 has brought with it considerable additional work by the diocesan authorities on behalf of their schools. Furthermore, these changes have occurred at a time when declining pupil numbers have required considerable involvement by diocesan officers in school reorganisations in most of the LEAs with which they work, including Liverpool.

The work of developing policy options, implementing policy and undertaking routine administrative work is carried out for the Archdiocese by its Schools Department, except in the case of support for Religious Education which is provided by its Christian Education Department, each department being headed by a different Director. In the case of the Anglican Diocese this work is undertaken by its Education Department, also headed by a Director. Each of these departments has an experienced but small staff of full time and part time officers. Despite the experience of their teams, however, both were considered too small for the volume of work required of them and the Archdiocesan Schools Department was restructured in 2002, followed by the Diocesan Education Department in 2003. In both cases restructuring involved expansion and in each case a shortage of diocesan funding meant that the financial support of schools was required to



facilitate the restructuring. This approach is typical of many Anglican and Catholic dioceses, as described in Chapter 4, but it is a clear sign of the impact of marketization that both Liverpool dioceses regarded this as the natural way to develop their relationships with their schools and that the schools themselves accepted this so readily.

In the case of the Archdiocese the need for such developments had been identified prior to the arrival of the new Director of Schools (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2002a, p. 2), although discussions with headteachers and governors did not begin until the autumn of 2001 when a series of meetings was held to identify a preferred option (Ibid, p. 1). The situation in the Diocese was not so well advanced when its new Director arrived in 2001 and a working group of officers and headteachers was formed to identify the level of demand for additional services from the Education Department and the best way of raising the funding required from schools (Diocese of Liverpool, 2003b, p. 5). This working group met during 2002, its proposals being accepted by the Diocesan Board of Education, after widespread consultations with schools, for implementation from September 2003 (Ibid). It is significant that both dioceses went to considerable lengths to involve schools in developing their models, which were described in both cases as extending the partnership between the diocese and its schools. The Catholic scheme was described as a response to demands from schools themselves and a sharing of the cost that this would involve under what was called the School Contribution Scheme (op.cit., pp. 1-3).

A similar case was made by the Diocese (op.cit., pp. 3-5), whose scheme, to emphasise this partnership, was called the Diocesan Family of Schools Service Agreement. The Diocese's scheme included a basic subscription to cover 'single core' services, including for example work with LEAs in support of schools with difficulties following OFSTED inspections. Additional services supporting building projects, religious education, management and leadership, legal advice and governors' support are bought back as schools require. The Archdiocese's scheme involves a single payment to cover all additional services.

As a consequence of their new arrangements, the Archdiocese was able to implement a significant re-structuring of its Schools Department in 2002/3 (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2002a, pp.1-2), followed by the Diocese in 2003-4 (Diocese of Liverpool, 2003c, p. 1).

Whilst in every other respect the strategic policy making process in the Liverpool dioceses conforms to the national pattern as described in Chapter 4, the Anglican Diocese embarked on a project with its neighbouring Anglican dioceses in 2003 which, although it has aroused interest in other Anglican dioceses remains unique to either church in England. In 2003 the diocesan directors of education for Blackburn, Chester, Liverpool and Manchester began to explore the possibility of establishing a jointly owned company also to be joined by Carlisle Diocese, following a decision in 2005 to support the development of policy and the work of schools in each diocese. In a jointly produced visioning document, they stated that:

“there is an overwhelming argument that, by working more closely together in partnership with Church colleges in the region as appropriate, north west DBEs (diocesan boards of education) will be significantly better placed to achieve the vision that we share for our Church schools and to further the mission of the church throughout the region” (Diocese of Liverpool, 2003a, p. 2)

The main purpose of establishing such a company is to share professional expertise between each diocese, facilitate developments that would otherwise have been difficult for one diocese acting alone, and thus, with the economies of scale that would result, increase the support given to approximately 700 Church of England schools in the region. It is envisaged that ultimately all education departmental staff in each diocese, except for the directors of education, would be employed by the company, probably by 2008, work being transferred to the company in phases (ibid, p. 6).

Whilst the details may differ from other dioceses, these developments in Liverpool reflect broadly the response of many Anglican and Catholic diocesan bodies to the increasing demands of the state and of marketization, described in Chapter 4, with particular reference to the development of income-generating service agreements and the need to develop further partnerships with their schools.

### Policy Texts

In addition to the many policy decisions taken by both dioceses, on matters

concerning particular schools or issues which are recorded in the various minutes of meetings and communications between the relevant parties, both dioceses have issued detailed policy documents on a range of general issues which underpin their work. These are contained in handbooks for schools produced by the Archdiocese (1995) and the Diocese (2004d) and in a number of other policy statements issued when required by events, for example to deal with new admission arrangements (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2003b). The Anglican Diocese also includes many of its policy statements in a Strategic Plan (Diocese of Liverpool, 2004b).

Many of these policy texts simply restate national policy of the two churches or legal requirements from national government, whilst much of the documentation relates to administrative processes established by the dioceses for schools to follow, especially with regard to buildings work, insurance and matters of governance. It is nevertheless worth noting a number of points relating to these policy texts in particular areas which demonstrate the relationship between locally and nationally produced policy at the strategic level at a more detailed level.

### *Governance*

Almost all of the information provided by the Archdiocese on matters of governance relates to statutory requirements and processes covering the constitution and duties of governing bodies. In no sense, therefore, can these be regarded as local policy texts, although there are a limited number

of statements within this documentation that are locally produced. It is made clear that all foundation governors are appointed by the Archdiocese unless the school is in the trusteeship of a religious order:

“foundation governors are appointed as members of the Roman Catholic community of the Archdiocese, who are accepted by the Trustees as suitable to fulfil their important function in preserving and developing the school to which they are appointed, as a Roman Catholic school ... it follows therefore, that foundation governors have a particular responsibility to ensure that policies are developed and implemented [to] support and complement the Archbishop’s position both in relation to the Trustee and in his ministry to teach and advance the Roman Catholic faith in his diocese. Foundation governors should properly see themselves as sharing with him in his ministry ... Foundation governors may only be removed by those who appoint them ... this might be because the governor was judged to be failing in his/her duty to preserve and develop the character of the school or to ensure that it is conducted in accordance with the terms of its Trust Deed” (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 1995, Section 1.03).

In practice, however, most foundation governors, especially for primary schools, are nominated by their parish priest to the Archdiocese (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2005b). Alongside the responsibilities that governors of a Catholic school are required by law to undertake, the Archdiocese also requires that they produce a mission Statement for their school which:

“should be a simple, clear, informative, short statement which answers the question: why do we exist as a Catholic school? As many as possible of the school community should be involved in its formulation. From the school Mission Statement will come the Aims and Objectives which will enable the effectiveness of the Mission Statement to be measured” (ibid, Section 3.01).

Likewise, the Anglican Diocese has a clear policy on the appointment of

foundation governors by the Diocesan Board of Education, which normally appoints two members of the governing body for an aided school and one for a controlled school in the primary phase, and all foundation governors for a secondary school. This policy is also recommended to parishes for the appointment of the remaining foundation governors in primary schools, and states that to become a foundation governor in person must be a practising Christian who belongs to the Church of England or another church which is a member of Churches together in Britain and Ireland (Diocese of Liverpool, 2004d, Section 2.6). The Diocese also includes a code of conduct for governors of schools (ibid, Section 2.2) and recommends that the ethos statement adopted by the governing body of each school “be rooted in the religious beliefs and values associated with the foundation of the school. Such an ethos can be a powerful influence on the school’s aims, purposes and day to day life” (ibid, Section 3.2).

Whilst the approach of both dioceses is similar, it is notable that the requirement of the Archdiocese for all its foundation governors to be Catholic is not matched by a requirement of the Diocese that foundation governors in its schools be Anglicans, in both cases reflecting national policy. It may be assumed that Anglican willingness to appoint a member of any mainstream church reflects, at least in part, the Church of England’s tradition of serving the wider community through its schools.

## *Staffing*

Policy statements from both the Archdiocese and Diocese on the appointment of staff in their schools also reflect national policy of both churches, but with details that illustrate how they are intended, in practice, to be implemented at a local level.

For Catholic schools, the Archdiocese relies heavily on a Memorandum issued in 1990 by the Catholic Bishops' Conference, which advises governors to use employment contracts provided by the Catholic Education Service for all staff and to give them "clear guidance about the Catholic character, education and life of their school" (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 1995, Chapter 5, p. 13). The post of head teacher, deputy head teacher and head or co-ordinator of Religious Education should only be filled by practising Catholics, whilst other teaching posts should be filled "as far as possible with practising and well qualified Catholic teachers. ... Nevertheless, we acknowledge with gratitude the devotion and service given by many non-Catholic teachers in our schools and we recognise our obligations to them" (ibid, p. 13).

Archdiocesan policy confirms the right of governors to dismiss a teacher, who acts in a way that is detrimental or prejudicial to the Catholic character of the school, although:

"experience indicates that governors will not wisely have recourse to summary dismissal if a Catholic teacher is found, for instance, to be in a marital situation which ignores the teachings of the Catholic Church on the sanctity of marriage. Advice should be sought in such

circumstances from the Archdiocesan Schools Department in the good hope of agreed procedure. The aim would be to secure that the ethos of the school is indeed safeguarded, but without unfair burdens being laid upon the perceived offender" (ibid, p. 8).

The Archdiocese makes clear that it expects to exercise its rights for a representative to be involved in an advisory capacity with LEA representatives for the appointment of a head teacher or deputy head teacher and the head of Religious Education in a secondary school (Ibid, p. 11).

As with guidance issued by the Archdiocese, much of the advice given to Anglican schools by the Diocese concerns the processes to be followed in relation to staffing matters, in particular the appointment of staff. In a voluntary aided Anglican school, the head teacher and deputy head teacher "must provide Christian leadership within the school. ... it is difficult to see how this can be achieved unless each is a practising Christian" (Diocese of Liverpool, 2004d, Section 6, p. 1). It is not, however, considered essential that such posts be filled by practising Anglicans, the requirement being membership of a church belonging to Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (ibid, p. 3), a position that reflects policy stated in the previous section on the appointment of foundation governors. For other teaching posts in aided schools, the Diocese urges governors:

"to exercise their right to appoint practising Christians for teaching posts whenever possible, but recognises the frequent difficulty in doing so and the need for governors to decide how and whether they would use this right in their own particular circumstances. The Board urges strongly, however, that only teachers who are supportive of the



aims and ethos of Church schools be appointed in voluntary aided schools ..." (ibid, p. 1.)

As with the Archdiocese, the Diocese insists on the involvement of its Director of Education or a representative to be involved throughout the appointment process for a head teacher or deputy head teacher at an aided school, in an advisory capacity to the governors, "and it is recommended that voluntary controlled schools, by agreement, follow the same procedure" (ibid, p. 1).

### *Aided School Buildings*

Archdiocesan and Diocesan published documentation relating to capital projects at voluntary aided schools describe in some detail the processes to be followed by headteachers and governing bodies and illustrate the extent of their financial commitment to schools. This is especially so in the case of the Archdiocese, where locally determined policy is that approval to include capital schemes within a capital programme is dependent upon the funds available to cover the governors' contribution from either the Archdiocesan schools Building Fund, the governors own resources or possibly from an LEA contribution, whilst "in certain circumstances a mixture of funding will apply. It is expected that some schemes will need to be funded exclusively by the governors themselves" (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 1995, Chapter 7, para. 3.6), whilst it is also made clear that alterations for extensions to school premises must have the consent of the Trustees, in most cases the Archdiocese (Ibid, p. 2). In 2005, approximately £1.9 million was available

from central funds to support governors' 10% contributions for major school building schemes across the Archdiocese, this being raised by a levy on parents (£4.50 per family) and parishes, yielding approximately £660,000 annually, governors having to raise their own contributions towards minor 'developed' capital schemes (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2005).

Anglican voluntary aided schools are likewise required to obtain the permission of the Diocesan Board of Education, as required by the 1991 Board of Education Measure, before carrying out any work on school buildings, with the Board ensuring "the provision of specialist advice to consider all such requests before approval is granted" (Diocese of Liverpool, 2004d, Section 7, p. 1). Perhaps because its policy was published later than that of its Catholic counterpart, the Diocese is much clearer that governing bodies and the local churches will be required to raise the 10% governors' contribution towards the cost of maintaining and improving the premises of voluntary aided schools, although it is recognised that under certain circumstances, especially with a major capital building project, "the costs involved may prevent this, in which case the Board will seek to provide financial support as far as possible from its own reserves or help to facilitate support from other sources" (ibid, p. 1). Having paid a significant part of the governors' contribution towards building a new primary school elsewhere in the Diocese during 2003/4, funds available for this purpose in 2005 were only £350,000 (Diocese of Liverpool, 2005b). The Diocese's Strategic Plan, however, makes it clear that all capital receipts obtained as the result of school closures will be used to support large capital projects at

existing schools or to support the creation of new Anglican schools in the Diocese (Diocese of Liverpool, 2004b, para. 3.7.5). Even allowing for the difference in size between the two systems, however, the disparity between the funding available to each diocese reflects clearly on the traditional approaches used to raise funds by each church.

### *Provision of School Places*

At a time when falling school rolls are seriously affecting the provision of school places in Liverpool and have led to an acceptance of the need for school re-organisation by both dioceses and the LEA, this aspect of policy has proved to be the most controversial aspect of the dioceses' work with their schools in the city and perhaps illustrates best the nature of the relationship between dioceses and local government. Whilst much of their policy is determined according to the issues surrounding individual cases, as will be shown in the next chapter, it is underpinned by policy statements from both the Archdiocese and Diocese, whilst both have, in general terms, subscribed to the need for change and approach to it as described in the LEA's successive School Organisation Plans since 2000. Representatives of each diocese have voted to accept each of these plans when approved by the Liverpool School Organisation Committee, most recently in 2003 (Liverpool City Council, 2003a).

In the case of the Archdiocese, its stated policy (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2000) relates only to the process to be followed, but is important in that it

reflects strongly the view that its school system is a discreet entity, operating within the LEA framework, but subject primarily to Archdiocesan decisions on the reorganisation of Catholic schools even though, as is acknowledged, only the LEA has the legal power to close a church school. The policy makes it clear that, whilst relying on LEA data and support, it is the Archdiocesan Trustees that will approve reorganisation proposals, produced by its own Schools Officers and, with LEA approval, Archdiocesan Officers will conduct consultations in the light of which the Trustees will make the final proposals to the LEA (ibid, Clauses i-xi).

In contrast, the policy of the Diocese recognises that Church of England schools, in the primary phase at least form part of the general school provision for the city and should therefore be considered alongside community schools in any reorganisation (Diocese of Liverpool, 2004b, Section 3.7). Whilst the LEA is expected to take the lead in formal reorganisation proceedings affecting Anglican schools, thereby reflecting the reality of its legal position, the Diocesan policy makes it clear that:

“in determining whether to support a proposal for the closure of a Church of England school, the Diocesan Board of Education will reach its decision according to the merits of the particular case and in the light of local circumstances and Statutory Guidelines on school organisation matters. Central to any decision will be the viability of the school and its consequent ability to provide the full curriculum entitlement of every pupil to the required standards. In particular, all pupils should be educated in schools that are of sufficient size to ensure staffing levels for effective curriculum delivery, taking full account of the effect of demographic changes and recognising that the minimum size for a viable primary school will vary according to LEA funding arrangements ...” (ibid, Section 3.7.4).

The potential for conflict with LEA policy that this statement provides will, with the difficulties that may also arise from the Catholic position, be examined in the next chapter.

### Strategic Networks

Most of this chapter has concentrated on the formal policy making processes and organisations of the Archdiocese and Diocese and the official policy texts that these produce. These things illustrate well the formation of diocesan policy at this level, but they are not the whole picture. Also of great importance in this process is the interaction between the church authorities and other groups, in particular the LEA, governors, headteachers and teachers, from which strategic policy can emerge, and which is to be found at the strategic level in any diocese.

The problem in quantifying the importance of 'policy as discourse' is the lack of clear evidence of its impact, as opposed to the wide range of evidence obtained from the policy texts and about the processes which underpin them. Minutes of the relevant meetings between different groups rarely give more than the outcome and less formal meetings, at which significant decisions can sometimes be made by key individuals, are often not minuted at all. Many formal policy texts, for example, will owe as much to discussions between diocesan officers and others, often outside the relevant diocese itself, as they do to formal debate and decisions taken within diocesan committees. As observed in Chapter 2, policy is both text

and discourse “not one or the other, but both: they are implicit in each other” (Ball, 1994, p. 15).

A detailed study of this strategic network of relationships would require access to much unpublished information, and interviews with a significant number of key players in the process, a task well beyond the scope of this study, but one that would reveal much about the true nature of policy formation. It is, nevertheless, possible to identify the key features of this strategic network in Liverpool from the relevant documentation from the City Council, Archdiocese, and Diocese. In particular, the involvement of Archdiocesan officers in the various formal and informal policy making groups in the city is summarised in a paper produced by Archdiocesan Schools Department (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2002a, pp. 8-11) and for the Anglican Diocese in its Strategic Plan (Diocese of Liverpool, 2004b, pp. 5-9) and its management plan (Diocese of Liverpool, 2004f). These describe the involvement of diocesan officers in the many formal bodies which between them determine much of the policy affecting schools in Liverpool.

Equally difficult to measure is the effect of the termly meetings that Archdiocesan officers hold with headteachers of Liverpool Catholic schools and Diocesan officers hold with headteachers of Anglican schools in the city, although it would be difficult to imagine that these meetings do not directly influence the implementation of policy in church schools, or that the view of headteachers on particular issues do not in turn influence formation of policy at a diocesan level. The same may be said of diocesan meetings with

foundation governors whilst in-service training provided for RE teachers and senior teaching staff will, inevitably, play some part in reinforcing diocesan policy. In all of these areas there are significant opportunities for major research into the complex relationships which underpin the formation of policy at a strategic level.

This chapter has made clear the extent to which policy making and the strategic level by the Archdiocese and Diocese in Liverpool reflects the characteristics of the Catholic and Anglican churches nationally, through the policy making structures of each diocese and the policy texts themselves. There is no evidence that the size of the Archdiocesan school system has distorted this or that the systems in either diocese has been unduly affected by local factors. Indeed, as has been shown, many of the policy texts simply restate national policies in a local context.

Despite the differences between the two dioceses, however, there is some evidence here that they are responding to changing circumstances in similar ways. This is particularly so in the way that both have developed their professional departments to meet the increasing demands placed upon them, both having taken full advantage of the culture of education marketisation in this process. There is evidence also, in the various policy texts produced by the Anglican Diocese that, reflecting the national changes in the Church of England's attitude to its schools, the Diocese of Liverpool is taking the role of its schools in supporting its wider mission more seriously than before the Dearing Report, particularly in seeking to support and

encourage the development of a strong and distinctive Christian identity in its schools, the Diocese is moving closer to the long held position of the Archdiocese.

These things may arguably be evidence of convergence between the two systems, but other, more conclusive, evidence exists of this. Both dioceses support formally the establishment of joint Anglican-Catholic schools where there is a clear case to be made for this and where strong support exists locally for such a project (Liverpool City Council, 2000a, Section 3.3, p. 45), and the Diocese goes further in its own policy statement which “welcomes the opportunity of working in partnership with the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Liverpool ... in the provision of joint Church schools ... and it celebrates the ecumenical significance of such schools” (op.cit., Section 3.7.2). The first such school opened in 1997 and, with others, will be referred to in detail in the next chapter. It is also worth noting the first ever joint conferences held in Liverpool by the Archdiocese and Diocese for headteachers and governors of their schools, on ‘The Curriculum in Successful Primary Schools: A Christian Response’ in April 2003 and on ‘Excellence and Enjoyment in Primary Schools’ in November 2003 (Diocese of Liverpool, 2003d, 2003g). Such developments would have been unthinkable in Liverpool until very recently.

Having examined in some detail the production of policy at a strategic level in Liverpool in this chapter, the next chapter will examine the reality of policy implementation in the city’s Anglican and Catholic schools, in what



the model for this study has termed 'the schools context', and to do so in a way that illustrates in some detail issues raised in Chapter 5 on church schools in the national context.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **THE LOCAL SCHOOLS CONTEXT:** **POLICY INTERPRETATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES IN** **LIVERPOOL CHURCH SCHOOLS**

The complexity of the strategic policy making process in Liverpool has been clearly illustrated in the previous chapter, illustrating in greater detail the picture of the national situation outlined in Section 2 of this study. This is, however, only part of the picture: as described by Ball (1994) and demonstrated in Chapter 5, the interpretation and implementation of policy at the micro level often leads to outcomes not envisaged by 'policy makers' operating at the strategic level. The extent to which this can further be demonstrated by the way certain aspects of policy impact on church schools in Liverpool is the focus of this last chapter in the case study. In some areas of policy, however, there is no evidence that the pattern described in previous chapters is not being followed or there is nothing of significance to add to illustrate further the picture already described. Consequently, no reference will be made here to school performance, implementation of policy on governance and there is little to add on implementation of policy on RE, worship or ethos.

## Religious Education, worship and ethos

It is clear from the evidence of their school prospectuses, each of which has sections on religious education, worship and school aims, that Anglican and Catholic schools in Liverpool follow national policy and advice closely with, for example, every Catholic primary and secondary school in the city using the RE syllabus recommended by the Archdiocese and in widespread use throughout England. Certain additional information does, however, provide insight into how church schools aim to implement policy in these areas. Reference is generally made, for example, to other aspects of the school's religious life, such as:

“Children are prepared for the Sacrament of the Eucharist in Year 2 and for the Sacrament of Reconciliation in Years 3 and 4, or at a stage of spiritual development which indicates readiness. Children celebrate a class assembly each term. They participate fully and actively at the level of their own development and understanding. Services and Masses are also part of the Liturgical experience. Parents are always welcomed at assemblies and School Masses” (Our Lady & St Philomena's School, 1999, p. 19).

All thirteen Catholic secondary schools teach RE to all pupils, most following a full or short examination course in Years 10 and 11, although some following a non-examination course at this level which might, as at other schools, be internally certificated (St John Bosco High School, 1999, p. 9). Students not studying RE for public examinations in Catholic sixth forms, are required to attend non-examination courses (Ibid, p. 10).

In the Anglican sector, all school prospectuses for voluntary aided primary

schools make it clear that the Diocesan Religious Education Syllabus is followed, although references to collective worship tend to be more general than in the Catholic sector, for example:

“Our teaching in this area also includes Christian Assemblies and stories. Services are held in church and we take every opportunity to give each child a growing realisation of their relationship with God and with other people. We try to lead the pupils towards a personal faith which will grow and develop as they mature” (Bishop Martin CE School prospectus, 1999, p. 16).

To some extent this may reflect the different traditions within the Church of England, not all of which focus on a Sacraments in the way that the Catholic Church does, this also reflects the approach of most Anglican schools, in Liverpool as elsewhere, in serving a wider community than simply Anglicans.

At secondary level, however, the three Anglican schools are more distinctive in terms of their collective worship, perhaps reflecting admission arrangements which reflect the ‘nurture’ aims of the schools. All three place great emphasis on this aspect of school life in their prospectuses and all include whole school and voluntary Eucharists within this. All three have at least one service annually at Liverpool Cathedral. The following statement is representative of all three schools:

“Each term begins with the Eucharist for the whole school. Festivals are also marked with a Eucharist or special service. Teaching Communion are also held for lower school students in the School Chapel. The Autumn Term ends with a Carol Service in Liverpool Cathedral to which parents are invited. An assembly is held at the beginning of each day, these taking the form of full assemblies in the school hall or form assemblies in the classrooms” (St Margaret’s CE High School prospectus, 1999, p. 12).

Religious Education is taught to all pupils in the three Anglican secondary schools, including those in Years 10 and 11 who, like their Catholic counterparts follow either GCSE or internally accredited courses. Sixth form courses for external examinations are offered by each school, together with non-examined courses. As noted in the previous chapter, the absence at present of a Diocesan secondary RE syllabus means that each school has developed its own. Each is keen to stress its Anglican credentials, for example:

“Archbishop Blanch School is an Anglican Foundation and the religious education provided conforms to the doctrines of the Church of England. The school believes that Religious Education is an important and positive part of the curriculum. The recent Ofsted Inspection identified the Department as ‘the flagship of the school’.” (Archbishop Blanch High School prospectus, 1999, p. 9).

Whilst there are clear differences between Anglican and Catholic schools regarding RE and Worship the distinctions are much more blurred when schools state their mission and ethos. Whilst the length and style of these statements varies between prospectuses, most stress the central importance of overtly Christian values in the life of their school. The following provide good examples of this:

“The School will look to Christ for the basis of its understanding of relationships. Relationships between staff and children and indeed parents will reflect Christ’s teaching. In the School community all children will be respected and valued and will be encouraged to grow in Christ and to respect and care for others” (St Gregory’s Catholic Primary School prospectus, 1999, p. 5)

Or, for an Anglican secondary school:

“it is intended that education at St Margaret’s should be both life-lasting and life-enhancing. Our mission statement focuses on the work and the life of the school which takes place in an orderly atmosphere where self-discipline, mutual respect and the welfare of each individual is greatly valued. Importance is given to regular worship, religious education in the classroom and on the general presentation of Christianity in the school family. The school presents the teaching of Our Lord but recognises that commitment is a matter which must be left to each individual.

We regard the school as an extension of the family. We want everyone to enjoy their time with us, to be proud of their school and to uphold the principles that underpin the Christian school.

[We aim] to promote Christian values and service in order that all may discover their own individual value and self-worth and to encourage them to respect the rights and beliefs of others ...” (St Margaret’s CE High School prospectus, 1999, p. 3).

Occasionally, the aspirations of a school are summed up in ways such as the following:

“Where Christ is at the heart of the community.  
Where every person is valued.  
Where every person is known and loved.  
Where co-operation is preferred to competition.  
Where compassion and forgiveness are in abundance.  
Where difficulties are talked through.  
Where success is shared.  
Where the day is begun and ended with a prayer.  
Where the Sacramental presence of Jesus Christ is celebrated.”  
(St Oswald’s Catholic Junior School prospectus, 1999, p. 3).

No attempt will be made here to judge the success of Liverpool schools in these areas; indeed the success nationally of Anglican and Catholic schools in achieving their stated aims regarding Religious Education, worship and ethos has been the subject of only limited research, as noted in Chapter 5. Detailed and objective research into the relevant sections of Ofsted and the related Section 23 denominational inspection reports for the city’s 83

Anglican and Catholic schools is, however, well beyond the scope of this case study and could be the subject of a thesis in its own right.

### **Staffing**

Limited evidence is available on staffing matters in Liverpool church schools to illustrate in greater depth a number of the issues highlighted at a national level.

Within Liverpool Catholic schools, 85% of primary teachers and 64% of secondary teachers are Catholic (Catholic Education Service, 2004b, Report 11), statistics that are in line with those for Catholic schools nationally, as quoted in Chapter 5. Information is not available on the number of teachers from other Christian denominations, other faiths or no faith. Nor is it possible to know the percentage of teachers who can be considered 'practising' as opposed to 'nominal' Catholics.

Information on the religious affiliation of teachers in Liverpool Anglican schools was obtained for the first time by a Diocesan Education Department survey in 2004 (Diocese of Liverpool, 2004c), although the information gained was incomplete as four primary schools did not respond. The survey showed that 38% of teachers at the three secondary schools were Anglicans, although a further 35% belonged to other Christian denominations, 73% of staff therefore being Christian. 70% of teachers at voluntary aided primary schools were Anglicans, with a further 27% belonging to other churches, 97%

overall therefore being Christian. Interestingly, 40% of teachers at controlled schools were recorded as Anglican with a further 29% of other churches. Such figures must be treated with caution, however, as the religious affiliation of staff at controlled schools would not usually be recorded in personnel information. As with Catholic teachers, there is no way of knowing the extent of actual religious activity that underpins these figures. The survey also showed that 7% of teachers in Anglican secondary schools, 6% in primary aided schools and 2% in primary controlled schools belonged to other faiths, with the remainder having no known faith.

As these figures demonstrate, like elsewhere in the country, it is more difficult than in the past to recruit Catholic teachers for Catholic schools and Anglican or other Christian teachers or Anglican aided schools although there are no reported difficulties in recruiting teachers or other staff in the city generally. The policy of both dioceses for the appointment of senior staff in their schools, however, as described in the previous chapter, frequently causes difficulties in making such appointments. Of the four headteacher posts advertised during 2004 and 2005 for Anglican primary schools, none received more than five applicants or produced a shortlist of more than three candidates, whilst two had to be re-advertised before a suitable appointment could be made (Diocese of Liverpool, 2005g). Whilst it was possible eventually to make appointments on each occasion, it is clear that the essential requirement for church involvement now reduces considerably the number of suitable candidates for such posts, including also those for deputy headteachers. The same situation exists for Catholic



schools in Liverpool with the post of headteacher at the largest Catholic secondary school having to be re-advertised before an appointment could be made in 2005 (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2005b).

Also reflecting the national trend in Catholic schools, the seven primary head teacher posts held by members of a religious order, mainly the Sisters of Notre Dame, as recently as 1990 (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 1990, pp 175-177) has now been reduced to one, paradoxically at the Faith joint Catholic/Church of England Primary School (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2005c, pp 177-189). Of the eight Catholic secondary schools which have religious orders as their trustees, only Bellerive and St Julie's now have a member of their order as headteacher (*ibid*) whereas in 1990 all did (*op. cit*, p 184).

Most prospectuses for Anglican and Catholic primary schools make clear reference to their links with local clergy who have some form of pastoral oversight for the school. All secondary schools for both churches have their own chaplains, although the nature of these appointments varies between schools. In the Catholic sector, six schools now follow current national advice by having lay chaplains; two have members of their religious order as chaplains, the remainder being priests, with one post currently vacant (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2005c, p. 189). Of the three Anglican secondary schools, two have local clergy operating on a part-time basis as chaplains, with the third having its head of RE, a non-stipendiary priest, fulfilling the role (Diocese of Liverpool, 2004g, p. 2).

## Admissions and Pupils

As previously noted, the right of parents who gain admission for their children to the school of their preference, provided they meet the admissions criteria of the school and places are available, was introduced by legislation in the 1980s. This is an area of complex relationships, the outcome of which determines the nature of the pupil populations of church schools and the character of the schools themselves in a way that was not always intended by the policy makers. In particular, as demonstrated in Chapter 5 the relationship between choice for parents and the popularity of many church schools, has led to claims of elitism in a system which, in some eyes, is already socially divisive. To what extent does the situation in Liverpool throw light on these issues?

The outcome of the new arrangements for admissions for secondary schools in September 2005 requiring parents for the first time to give a 'first preference' is shown in Table 8 (Liverpool City Council, 2005a, pp. 1-3).

**TABLE 8 - Secondary School Admission, 2005**

Sector	Number of Schools	Number of places available	1 <sup>st</sup> preference applicants as % of places available	1 <sup>st</sup> preference % granted a place where requested*	Number of schools in sector full/over subscribed
Community	14	3050	65%	97%	4
Catholic	12	2302	88%	85%	5
CofE	3	419	119%	67%	3
Other	3**	390	186%	41%	2

**Notes**

\* places sometimes given to 2<sup>nd</sup> preference applicants instead of 1<sup>st</sup> preference applicants when a school is oversubscribed if the latter do not meet admissions criteria.

\*\* includes St Francis of Assisi Joint CE/Catholic Academy opening in 2005, following closure of a Catholic school. Also includes Blue Coat School, city's only grammar school which distorts sector figures (only 21% of 1<sup>st</sup> preference applicants admitted).

These figures indicate clearly the comparative popularity of schools in the Anglican and Catholic secondary sectors compared to the Community sector. Information on primary admissions in 2005 is also available (ibid), but much less informative as few primary schools are oversubscribed with almost all parents getting their preferred choice of school for their children. Nevertheless, the popularity of church schools in the city is increasing, as a comparison between the pupil numbers in each sector in 1989 (Liverpool City Council, 1989) and 2004 (Liverpool City Council, 2004c), demonstrates, as summarised in Table 9

**Table 9 - Pupil Trends, by Sector, 1989-2004**

Category	1989		2005	%
	Pupil Numbers	%	Pupil Numbers	%
<u>Primary</u>				
CofE (VA)	1,670	3.7%	1,769*	4.9%
CofE (VC)	1,783	3.9%	1,346	3.7%
All CofE	3,453	7.7%	3,115*	8.6%
Catholic	16,254	36.1%	13,497*	37.2%
Other	25,317	56.2%	19,655	54.2%
Total	45,024		36,267	
<u>Secondary</u>				
CofE	2,204	7.4%	2,703	8.1%
Catholic	10,901	36.8%	13,206**	39.4%
Other	16,494	55.8%	17,593	52.5%
Total	29,599		33,502	
<u>Notes</u>				
* Includes one joint CE/Catholic primary school -pupil number split between CE and Catholic				
** Increase partly due to inclusion since 1989 of a former independent school, via Grant Maintained status.				

The use of the year 1989 in this table is significant because it is the last year before the first schools left the LEA to become grant maintained, thereby removing their pupil numbers from the LEA statistics. It will be noted that the overall pupil figures in the primary phase declined significantly during this period, whilst the number in secondary schools increased, although

secondary intakes have begun to decline since 2001. Whilst voluntary aided primary school numbers declined overall, they did so at a slower rate than other schools, reflecting the fact that the most popular schools remained full because of parental preferences for admissions. At the same time, in the secondary phase, despite overall numbers increasing, the proportion of pupils attending church schools increased at a greater rate. This was in part due to St Edward's College joining the Catholic system when grant maintained schools were abolished after 1998, but it also reflects the expansion of certain schools in response to demand for places.

Alone amongst the church schools sectors, only the voluntary controlled sector has declined in its percentage share of pupils. This may reflect the fact that it was the most affected sector in the major primary re-organisation of 1989-91 when the number of controlled schools was halved from 12 to 6 through amalgamations and closures.

In this respect, therefore, the popularity of church schools in both sectors reflects the national situation, to which detailed reference has been made in Chapter 5, although there are, of course, significant differences between individual schools in each sector. Nevertheless, in the secondary phase five Catholic schools and the three Anglican schools are amongst the ten most popular schools in the city when measured by the percentage of successful first preference applications (Liverpool City Council, 2005a). As with the national situation, it is difficult to be certain of the reasons for this popularity, although it is undoubtedly true that many parents choose them

because of their own religious affiliation or because they value the Christian ethos that they perceive the schools to have. It is also most likely, however, that many choose church schools because of their perceived academic success, in Liverpool as elsewhere (Liverpool City Council, 2005b).

Whatever the reasons for their popularity, church schools in Liverpool appeal to more than just members of their own churches. The percentage of Catholic pupils attending Catholic primary schools in the city has fallen from 96% in 1997 to 92% in 2004, whilst the percentage in secondary schools has fallen from 93% to 91% covering the same period (Catholic Education Service, 1997, 2004b). This trend seems likely to continue, as the percentage of Catholic pupils currently in Catholic schools in 2004 decreases gradually by age group from 94% of 15 year olds to 92.3% of 11 year olds to 90% of 4 year olds (ibid, 1994). Unfortunately, there is no information available on the faith background of non-Catholic pupils and it is impossible to tell how many of the Catholic pupils are practising as opposed to nominal Catholics. Despite these trends, however, it should be noted that the percentage of Catholic pupils attending Catholic schools in Liverpool is higher than the percentage nationally, which as noted in Chapter 6 is now below 90% in primary schools and 82% in secondary schools.

The faith backgrounds of pupils attending Anglican schools are not recorded in the same way nationally and the first such survey in Liverpool was only carried out by the Diocesan Board of Education in 2004, making it impossible to establish any trends. The information provided on pupils' admissions

records relates only to the intake group and four primary schools did not respond, making the information indicative at best. These returns show that 62% of the Year 7 intake for the three secondary schools were from Anglican families, 29% from other Christian families, 2% had no known faith, and 7% - all at the two girls' schools - belonged to other faiths (Diocese of Liverpool, 2004c). Of the pupils entering the reception class at Anglican voluntary aided primary schools 52% were from Anglican families, 23% from other Christian families and 6% from other faith backgrounds but 19% had no known faith. At one of these schools, St Margaret of Antioch, half the pupils admitted were from non-Christian faiths. Perhaps surprisingly, the number of Anglicans entering voluntary controlled schools was higher, at 66%, with 11% of pupils coming from other Christian backgrounds, 2% from other faiths and 21% having no known faith. Whilst active involvement with a church or faith group is essential for admission under the faith criteria at one of the heavily over subscribed Anglican secondary schools, it is non essential for most Anglican primary schools and it seems likely that a significant number of those claiming to be Anglicans are nominally so: in the words of one headteacher on the census form, "the percentage of Anglicans regularly attending church is more like 10% [than the 80% shown]" (ibid).

What evidence is there in the Liverpool context to support the view often stated nationally by their opponents that church schools are socially divisive and elitist? Some indication of the socio-economic characteristics of pupils attending Anglican and Catholic schools in the city in comparison to other schools, can be obtained from the percentages of pupils qualifying for free

school meals and the percentages of pupils with English as an additional language. It should, however, be noted that whilst these are frequently used indicators, they lack sophistication, although they are, unfortunately, the only ones available. The information contained in Table 10 is taken from published LEA statistics (Liverpool City Council, 2004c).

**Table 10 - Indicators of socio-economic characteristics of pupils attending Liverpool schools - by sector, 2004**

Sector	% of pupils qualifying for free school meals	% of pupils with English as an additional language
<u>Primary</u>		
Community	39.3%	6.7%
C of E	40.9%	8.5%
Catholic	34.2%	3.7%
Other	1.0%	3.6%
City Average	36.8%	5.6%
<u>Secondary</u>		
Community	37.2%	3.5%
C of E	8.0%	3.6%
Catholic	31.0%	1.6%
Other	6.3%	1.8%
City Average	30.2%	2.6%

In the primary phase, there is little significant difference between the



Anglican, Catholic and Community sectors in terms of free school meals entitlement, although the percentage of pupils with English as an additional language in the Catholic sector is less than half that for the Anglican sector, reflecting perhaps the admissions characteristics of most Anglican primary schools which place them firmly in the 'service' tradition. It may also reflect the location of two Anglican schools, St Margaret of Antioch and St Silas, which have the second and third highest percentages in the city of pupils with English as second language, 65.5% and 49.7% respectively. Four Anglican and twelve Catholic schools have above the average percentage of pupils in this category, whilst over half of the Catholic primary schools and eleven of the fourteen Anglican primary schools have above average levels of pupils with free school meal entitlement. The Anglican sector has highest percentage of pupils in each category in the city.

At secondary level, the percentage of pupils qualifying for free school meals is slightly above the city average in the Catholic sector, in which four schools are amongst the eight with more than 45% of pupils entitled to free school meals (ibid), but significantly below in the Anglican sector. The Anglican secondary sector, however, has the highest percentage of pupils with English as an additional language, reflecting the fact that the two girls' schools, with 90 Year 7 pupils between them in this category, are popular with Muslim families (Liverpool City Council, 1996b). As in the primary phase, Catholic secondary schools admit lower than the average percentage of pupils with English as an additional language.

The admissions arrangements and the pupil populations that result from these in the Anglican and Catholic sectors in Liverpool can, therefore, be seen to reflect the national and diocesan policies of the two churches. Catholic schools still predominantly serve the Catholic population of the city and, despite the lower than average percentage of pupils with English as a second language, may be said to serve a full socio-economic cross section of the city's population. The same is true of Anglican primary schools, which in practice are rarely over subscribed and admit a full range of children from their local communities, in line with the post-Dearing 'service' model favoured by the Church of England. The three Anglican secondary schools, however, are typical of the majority of their counterparts which, despite no longer operating entirely on the 'nurture' model, thereby satisfying national and diocesan policy, display the characteristics of most heavily over subscribed, academically successful schools, although two of them are also amongst the most racially mixed schools in the city. It must be stressed again, however, that the policy outcomes in this complex area, vary considerably between individual schools, even in the same sector as each responds to its own particular circumstances. There is certainly no evidence that, collectively, church schools in Liverpool are elitist or particularly divisive in terms of socio-economic or racial factors, although individual schools (as in the community sector) may display such characteristics. It is particularly significant that church schools remain more popular than the community sector in Liverpool as, unlike many other places, popularity does not reflect a shortage of places, other than for Anglican secondary schools.

## Capital Policy Implementation

It has been noted that the implementation of policies on capital building projects by both dioceses, described in the previous chapter, is a matter of applying clearly defined administrative processes. For the three years 2003/4 to 2005/6 there is no evidence that the policy of either diocese was varied in its application, but it is worth noting briefly the details of capital spending in these years as evidence of the level of investment, of which 10% is 'governors liability'.

Over these three years the total capital allocation to both dioceses by the DfES was £16.93 million, of which £11.22 million was allocated for Catholic schools and £5.71 million for Anglican schools (Diocese of Liverpool, 2005). The total 'governors liability' was therefore £1.693 million, a significant challenge for local churches and the schools themselves to meet. Of this amount, the application of policy for Anglican schools required the whole of their 'governors liability', £570,965, to be raised locally in this way, whilst for Catholic schools £816,318 was raised directly by parishes and schools, the remaining £306,050 being funded by the Archdiocese from its levy on parishes and schools (ibid).

It is not possible to tell from information held by either diocese the extent to which school budgets, as opposed to fundraising by parishes or parents, many have contributed to these amounts, but there is clear evidence of major school fundraising efforts in many cases, indicating that schools

rather more than church communities carry this responsibility. For example, 3 major projects at St Margaret's CE High School during this period, with a 'governors liability' in excess of £200,000, were funded in this way (ibid).

Out of the total DfES allocation of £16.93 million over these years, £9.69 million was allocated by formula between every voluntary aided school, but the remainder funded large projects at specific schools, for which governors' contributions were significant. These included classroom extensions and remodelling at Childwall CE Primary School, costing £500,000, and at Bishop Martin CE Primary School, costing £305,000 (ibid). Within the Catholic sector, extensions and improvements at Holy Trinity Primary School cost £726,000, the single siting of St Christopher's Primary School cost £767,969 and the building of a new hall and kitchen at St Matthew's Primary School cost £715,226 (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2005a).

As noted in Chapter 5, these amounts are for years in which DfES capital allocations have increased very significantly and are not therefore typical of the post-1988 period as a whole. They do, however, give a clear picture of the extent of the ongoing commitment to church schools in one of the most disadvantaged areas in England and to the size of the challenge facing both dioceses in a period of declining church membership in consequence of the requirements for governors' contributions to capital schemes at aided schools. Fortunately, the government's agreement to fund its Building Schools for the Future programme at 100% for aided secondary schools

(National Society, 2005) has avoided a major crisis in Liverpool, which is in the programme's second wave, as the cost of rebuilding or refurbishing all church secondary schools in the city as planned, would have been far beyond the capacity of either diocese under traditional arrangements (ibid).

### **Provision of School Places**

Maintaining places at church schools, especially at a time when falling pupil numbers leads to pressure for school closures and amalgamations, is perhaps the most challenging aspect of policy with which the Archdiocese and Diocese have been faced in recent years, with the potential to test to the full the relationships between each diocesan body, the LEA, in the case of sixth form provision the Learning and Skills Council, the governors, staff, parents and local church at any school involved. Such issues almost always involve confrontation between the authorities proposing change and the school communities involved.

In the great majority of cases, despite the conflict with school communities, re-organisation proposals in Liverpool during recent years have been implemented, demonstrating clearly that when the church authorities and LEA are in agreement on such proposals, even the most organised local campaign is likely to fail. For example, a major primary school re-organisation in the city involving the closure or amalgamation of thirteen community, Catholic and Anglican schools in 1996 was implemented in its entirety with the only significant change being to the proposed site of an

amalgamated school (Liverpool City Council, 1996a). Since 1989 the Anglican system in Liverpool has been reduced by three aided primary schools and six controlled schools, whilst the Catholic sector has been reduced by three secondary schools and the remarkable number of 32 primary schools, often through amalgamation of schools, particularly in the Catholic sector by the amalgamation of infant and junior schools on the same site (Liverpool City Council, 1989, 2004c). It is, however, the comparatively small number of instances where proposals fail, or where the church authorities find themselves in conflict with one of the other authorities that are most informative about the ways in which the two dioceses operate in such circumstances and about the real nature of policy making in this important area.

In January 2001, the Archdiocese brought forward proposals to re-organise its primary schools in the Vauxhall/Everton area of the city as its first contribution to a city-wide LEA review of primary provision (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2001b, p. 1). Whilst there were two options presented by the Archdiocese, either would have reduced the number of Catholic primary schools in the area from 5 to 2, closing The Friary, Holy Cross and St Mary's, and St Gerard's, each with falling pupil numbers and fewer than 170 pupils, and concentrating provision on the sites of the larger Mother Teresa and Our Lady of Reconciliation primary schools. The scale of the proposed changes and the size and location of the proposed new schools, provoked huge opposition from the communities affected, in particular the Eldonians who had gained local prominence with their successful opposition to the Militants

on the City Council during the 1980s. Consequently, the LEA opposed the Archdiocese's proposals and refused to sanction the consultations (Liverpool City Council, 2001b).

Whilst LEA officers had worked with the Archdiocese in the early stages of its review, its rejection of the proposals reflected more than the scale of public opposition to them. In particular, there was concern that the two new schools were close to each other and that the closure of The Friary and Holy Cross and St Mary's would leave small, but geographically isolated communities without any primary school (ibid). As a consequence, when revised proposals were produced in 2002 by the Archdiocese, they were for a primary school combining the two larger schools with St Gerard's, retaining Holy Cross and St Mary's School and replacing The Friary with a new Joint Catholic/Anglican school, all to be completely rebuilt with 100% DfES funding, as an extension of the LEA's Private Finance Initiative (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2003c). Despite strong opposition to the size of the new Trinity School in Vauxhall, the proposals were passed with the support of the LEA, after an extended period of consultation in 2003. The new schools opened in 2004, although not in their intended new buildings because of the collapse of the PFI contractor, Jarvis, and the delayed building projects will be completed under conventional methods, although still 100% funded by the DfES.

If the potential difficulties associated with Archdiocesan policy in this area are illustrated by the above example, a further example illustrates the

potential difficulties inherent in the Anglican Diocese's decision-making processes. In February 2002 the LEA, having obtained agreement of the Diocese to consult, brought forward proposals for either the closure of St Margaret of Antioch Primary School or its amalgamation with the neighbouring St Silas Primary School (Liverpool City Council, 2002a, document 1). Whilst St Silas had 188 pupils, St Margaret of Antioch had only 105, although both were well funded for their size because of the high level of social disadvantage amongst their pupils, many of whom had English as an additional language (Liverpool City Council, 2004c). Following difficult consultation meetings, the LEA decided to proceed with the closure of St Margaret of Antioch rather than an amalgamation, a decision that was supported overwhelmingly by the Diocesan Board of Education in March (Diocese of Liverpool, 2002b). Whilst the policy of the Diocese, as explained in the previous chapter, explicitly rejected the idea of a school's viability being measured by its size, in contradiction to the LEA's policy linking viability to a minimum one form of entry (Liverpool City Council, 2002a), there were real concerns that the school would soon not be viable. The school and church communities, however, disagreed and conducted a strong campaign, high in emotion and focusing on its work with the local Muslim population in an area where the Toxteth Riots had occurred twenty years earlier. As a result of this campaign, with a budget and recovery plan produced at the school at the last minute, the Diocesan Synod asked the Board of Education to reconsider its position and when the City Council's Lifelong Learning Committee called for other options to be examined, both authorities reversed their earlier decisions with the proviso that school's



progress be reviewed in three years (Liverpool City Council, 2002a).

The episode involving St Margaret of Antioch School illustrates the extent to which the relatively democratic processes of the Church of England can lead to disagreement, in this case not simply between the Diocese and LEA, but within the Diocese itself. Whatever the merits of this particular proposal, it seems likely that the Diocesan Board of Education, a statutory body with clearly defined powers, reversed its original decision partly in order to avoid a constitutional clash with its own Diocesan Synod.

The issues around St Margaret of Antioch School also illustrates the potential problems of a Diocesan policy that would be seen as reasonable by all concerned in Lancashire, where the LEA itself has common cause with the Diocese in maintaining small, rural primary schools, but which in an urban area like Liverpool is probably viewed by the LEA as unreasonably protective. In this context, it should be remembered that many members of both the Diocesan Synod and Diocesan Board of Education are elected from areas, including West Lancashire, which have little in common with Liverpool.

Reference has already been made in Chapter 4 to the report produced by the Audit Commission (DfES, 2005) which pointed to the complex relationships between LEAs and diocesan authorities which underpin school re-organisations involving church schools. This is demonstrated clearly in the examples given for Liverpool, which demonstrate yet again the

unpredictable nature of policy implementation and outcomes identified by Ball (1994). It is also clear from the examples given that the Archdiocese and Diocese face the same problems of population change and the resulting issues of school viability in Liverpool, even if they deal with them in differing ways that reflect the traditions and structures of the two churches. It should also be noted that this experience has led to them working in greater partnership in a number of areas. This is demonstrated most notably through the creation of three joint Catholic/Church of England schools which are the most visible evidence of convergence between the two systems in Liverpool.

### **Joint Catholic/Church of England Schools in Liverpool**

The development of national policy in this area and its application have been outlined in chapters 4 and 5. It is clear that no single model for joint Anglican/Catholic schools exists nationally, with particular variations in the teaching of RE and school admissions, but a common feature in all successful examples of such schools, in addition to the full commitment of staff and the avoidance of its 'fudging', was the strong support of local churches and dioceses (Gilpin, 1994, pp 203-4). It was also noted that Arthur (1995, p. 226) identified pragmatism rather than idealism behind the establishment of most joint schools. Whilst their number nationally remains

small, from September 2005 Liverpool will have three such schools, with proposals for three more receiving serious consideration elsewhere in the two dioceses. In what ways can these schools be seen to reflect and illustrate further the national picture, or do they simply reflect a unique Liverpool context?

Writing half way through their time in Liverpool, Bishop David Sheppard and Archbishop Derek Worlock described the difficulties of establishing a joint school:

“Although there are a number of cases where Anglican parents choose to send their children to a Roman Catholic high school in preference to the local county school, we have as yet had no success in establishing a joint or so called ‘Christian’ school at secondary level. We have made it plain that in principle we are not opposed to such a scheme but, where possible, parental wishes must be observed and experience suggests that such a venture would be easier and more successful in an area where altogether new secondary provision is required. The difficulties of such a project, if it is to be formed from existing schools of unequal numbers and of different traditions, appear almost overwhelming” (Sheppard & Worlock, 1988, p. 102).

At that stage, attention was clearly focused on the possibility of a joint secondary rather than primary school and they went on to explain why they had been unable to achieve this:

“When, due to falling rolls, we were asked to consider the establishment of a joint ‘Christian’ school in an area served by a Roman Catholic secondary school and one county comprehensive school, we found it difficult to explain to governors, staff and parents that what was being proposed meant a new venture and was not just a matter of admitting Anglican pupils to the existing Roman Catholic school. It then became clear that if one form of entry from the Anglican primary school were diverted each year to the joint school,

the county comprehensive might well become unviable because of the reduced numbers. In such circumstances the suggested joint venture was a non-starter" (ibid, pp 102-103).

Looking back in his autobiography, David Sheppard reflected on these difficulties and his and Derek Worlock's eventual success:

"Both of us longed to see joint schools coming into being. That was frustrated for most of our years in Liverpool because of falling rolls in the schools. As the population dropped, local authorities were closing schools rather than opening them ... Our hope for a joint school eventually came to fruition in a large new housing area, where rolls were increasing. Long negotiations led to a joint two-form entry primary school in Croxteth Park - Emmaus School - that Patrick Kelly and I visited together during my last months. It was the first newly built school for Liverpool in twenty five years, and it meant much that the city had wanted it to be a church school" (Sheppard, 2002, pp. 265-266).

### *Emmaus School*

Emmaus School opened as a 2 forms of entry school in September 1997 and has been over subscribed for Reception Class places ever since (Emmaus School, 2004). It was built at a total cost of £2.2 million, the two dioceses funding between them the governors' 15% contribution of £270,000 (DFE, 1994, p. 8). A joint trust, consisting of three trustees from each diocese was established with responsibility for the school site and buildings, and the school's eight Foundation Governors were split equally between the dioceses (Archdiocese of Liverpool/Diocese of Liverpool, 1996, p. 1). Teaching staff appointments were also split 50/50, although the

headteacher insists “we always went for the best quality teacher” (Diocese of Liverpool, 2003f). The Governors established two posts of deputy headteacher, an Anglican and a Catholic being appointed, with the headship being advertised for a member of either church and being filled by a Catholic.

Advice from the two dioceses was that:

“The ... school will need to provide for its pupils a sound Christian Religious Education, an opportunity for Christian Worship in accordance with the disciplines of their respective denominations and a general setting and atmosphere consonant with Christian faith and ethics ...

Whilst there will be times when a single denominational celebration may be appropriate, generally speaking the collective worship of the school, eg assemblies, should grow out of the Religious Education undertaken in the classroom.

The elements of school life that are catechetical in nature will be better undertaken in the parish context, eg preparation for First Sacramental Celebrations.

All this will require the full support and co-operative of parents and the local clergy. Care should be taken lest the children be introduced at school to collective worship contrary to the practise in their own parishes.” (Archdiocese of Liverpool/Diocese of Liverpool, 1996, p. 3).

From the start the school followed an implicit policy of “together is better. We ... have always worked on the basis of RE being in mixed denomination groups” (Emmaus School, 1998, p. 1). This position had been advocated strongly by Archbishop Worlock in the belief that it would be wrong to segregate pupils in any way at the school. (SFA Academy, 2005b). The school adopted the national Catholic RE syllabus *Here I Am* with the addition

of relevant Anglican prayers and practises together with elements of the Anglican Diocesan Syllabus in 1997, supported by diocesan advisers. A major review was undertaken in 2003 to create a new syllabus drawing in equal measure on the existing Catholic syllabus and the new Anglican syllabus, this task being undertaken with the support of advisers from each diocese (Diocese of Liverpool, 2003f).

Considerable effort was made to ensure that the school affirmed the traditions and beliefs of both churches, with attention being given to detail such as the form of the Lord's Prayer to be taught, the use of hymns that children would know from the two parish churches, the practise of crossing oneself and the use of the Hail Mary (Emmaus School, 1998, p. 7).

"First Communion preparation takes places in the parishes but it was thought important that some input should take place in school. Also it was hoped that many children would want to share in their friends' celebrations. ... it was stressed that we did not want to ignore the differences in liturgical celebrations in the two denominations and indeed we remain aware that Masses/Eucharistic services will take place in the school" (ibid, p. 1).

Catholic children receive their First Holy Communion in Year 3, but the whole year group attends the service with Anglican children receiving a blessing at the altar rail and the reverse happens when an Anglican Eucharist is celebrated (Diocese of Liverpool, 2003f). Section 23 inspections are conducted jointly by Anglican and Catholic inspectors.

Whilst small changes have been made to the school's admissions

arrangements since 1997, they remain essentially as originally agreed, with 50% of places allocated to local Catholic children and 50% to local Anglican children, and in the event of over subscription 'priority will be given to children whose parents/guardians are most faithful to the Church and/or have brothers or sisters ... in attendance at the school' (Emmaus School, 2004).

The school's success was confirmed by its 2004 Ofsted inspections and is, in no small measure, according to the headteacher, due to strong links with both church communities "the strong leadership of the clergy and governors, with the huge commitment of staff ... we believe so strongly in the things we are doing" (Diocese of Liverpool, 2003f).

### *Faith School*

The city's second joint Catholic/Church of England Primary School opened in the Everton area in September 2004. Reference has already been made to the re-organisation of Catholic primary schools in this part of Liverpool, one of the most economically and socially disadvantaged communities in Britain which has suffered major depopulation during the latter years of the Twentieth Century. Within this community, The Friary Catholic Primary School was the only school serving an area 'landlocked' by major roads and a park. This area is designated by the City Council for housing regeneration, key to which is a primary school serving the whole community. Despite

having only 114 pupils in September 2001 (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2001b) the LEA considered its survival essential for regeneration and, in order to serve the whole community in future years, persuaded the Archdiocese and Diocese to establish a joint school with Anglican places available, under the 'service' model, for all non-Catholic children (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2001c).

This was, therefore, a very different joint school to Emmaus, although much was made of it following the Emmaus example (ibid). It would, however, be wrong to characterise it as largely the product of pragmatism: the area is close to a traditional 'Orange' Protestant area and within recent memory had been affected by sectarianism. The local churches have worked hard to overcome this from the Sheppard/Worlock years and both dioceses in 2001 welcomed this initiative. James Jones, the Anglican Bishop of Liverpool warmly welcomed the proposal as:

"a most exciting and significant development for this part of Liverpool. The school will be an important symbol of ecumenical co-operation in an area where there was once sectarian strife. It also reaffirms the commitment of the Churches to our work in the most disadvantaged communities on Merseyside as part of their regeneration" (ibid).

The Catholic commitment to supporting regeneration was stressed by Archbishop Patrick Kelly:

"For over two years the parishes in Everton and Vauxhall have been involved in a process whose goal has been regeneration; this response to the schooling needs of the area should contribute to the well being



of many families and be a source of new vitality” (ibid).

The commitment of both dioceses can be seen more in idealistic than pragmatic terms and the symbolic significance of the school perhaps explains the high level of support they gave it, along with the LEA, during its difficult first year when, ahead of any real regeneration, pupil numbers continued to fall, for a time threatening its viability (Liverpool City Council, 2004d, 2005c). Faith Primary School, as the new school was called, also suffered in its first year from the collapse of the Council’s Private Finance Initiative contractor, Jarvis, which would have built and managed the new building and although the DfES confirmed its willingness to build a new school using traditional procurement methods, with 100% government funding, this will be at least two years later than originally intended (Liverpool City Council, 2004e).

Despite the tradition of sectarianism in the area, however, the new school received strong support from the local population, expressed at the consultation meetings which considered the proposal (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 2002c) and surprisingly only one letter of opposition was received, from a group calling itself St Mary of the Angels Action Committee, also known as the Liverpool Vatican, which objected to the “pernicious and ill-conceived proposal ... there should be absolutely no inter-faith adulteration of the propagation of the Catholic faith” (Liverpool City Council, 2003d, p. 25).

Whilst very different to Emmaus School in many respects, the Faith Primary School followed its example in its arrangement for governance, RE and worship although, as noted, its admissions arrangements differed in that, if over-subscribed, its Anglican places would be given to local children, regardless of their faith background (ibid, p. 45).

In practise, however, until the effects of regeneration are felt, the majority of pupils will remain Catholic, reflecting the nature of the area, as will for some years the staff who transferred from The Friary Catholic School. Whilst the newly appointed Headteacher is also a Catholic, the Governing Body has a strong Anglican presence and its Chair is an Anglican Foundation Governor (Faith Primary School, 2004).

It is too early, after only a year of its existence, to judge the school's success, but it appears to have overcome its initial financial problems and to be providing a good level of education to its pupils (Liverpool City Council, 2005c). Ultimately, however, its success is inextricably linked to the regeneration of the Everton area which it was established to support.

### *The Academy of St Francis of Assisi*

The Academy of St Francis of Assisi, became in September 2005 the first

joint secondary school to be opened by the two dioceses and, indeed, is the first joint secondary school in the North West of England. It is also the first joint school to be built in the country under the City Academies Programme, originally intended to provide a radical education alternative in the most disadvantaged areas of the country, where conventional approaches were deemed to have failed. The programme is supported especially by the Church of England which is involved in a number of projects (National Society, 2005). The Academy will replace the smaller Our Lady's Catholic High School and will be housed in a new, environmentally friendly, building with accommodation for 900 pupils in the 11-16 age range, on a new site at the edge of the Kensington New Deal for Communities area. This is one of the most disadvantaged areas in the city:

“A community that feels it has been excluded, with local people not knowing where to turn to influence decisions affecting them. They have felt abandoned by service providers, housing organisations that have not maintained or developed the area. This lack of opportunity to influence decisions, to change their own lives and the way that the area looks and works has led to apathy, frustration and growing anger” (Archdiocese of Liverpool and Diocese of Liverpool, 2002, p. 4)

Whilst the academy replaces a small school, the future viability of which was not secure, its origins owe considerably more to idealism than to a pragmatic wish to secure a continuing Catholic presence in the area. In particular, the desire of the two churches to engage with this community and the views of the Anglican Bishop of Liverpool, James Jones, who also chaired the New Deal Board for Kensington, on how communities should be involved in determining their future, were critical to the project's

development. He describes its origins thus:

“In the early days of Kensington Regeneration when we were working out what New Deal would be for the community there were lots of consultations.

When at one of them I heard people say that one of their major concerns was young people I asked if anyone ever thought of asking for a secondary school for the Kensington area. I was told ‘we wouldn’t be allowed it’. I replied by saying that this was New Deal and if this is what the community thought was best for the future, then they should put it in the plan.

This coincided with the Government’s City Academy Initiative offering a completely different sort of education for inner city young people” (quoted in SFA Academy, 2003, p. 1)

From the start, the project therefore involved the local community through extensive local consultations and community representatives on its steering group and eventually as Governors, with significant involvement by Kensington Regeneration Officers. One community representative, Sharon McLaughlin, described the project’s significance:

“The Academy will give children the inspiration they need to succeed in education and the local people that I have spoken to are all in favour of it ... improved education will form some of the building blocks we need to re-build Kensington and the surrounding area, children are the future and the only way to move forward is to invest in them. ... it will be at the heart of the community physically as well as spiritually and will have a very positive effect on morale and inspiration for both children and their parents” (ibid, p. 7).

The Bishop’s view on the environment and Christian responsibility for it, about which he has spoken frequently and written (Jones, 2003), also influenced key decisions by the Steering Group and Board, both of which he

chaired. In particular, the Academy's specialism is the Environment, its building has been constructed according to the highest environmental buildings standard in terms of design materials and energy systems, and its location beside the somewhat neglected Newsham Park was chosen to provide a resource for the specialism and as a means to enable regeneration of the park (Archdiocese of Liverpool and Diocese of Liverpool, 2002).

The project began under Anglican sponsorship, with the Bishop raising almost £1.4 million in donations and grants from various benefactors towards the required target of £2 million, the target being reached after the Archdiocese became involved in 2001, thereby contributing the Our Lady's site value (ibid, p. 3). The balance of funding for the £17 million project is contributed by the DfES (SFA Academy, 2005a). Whilst the Academy is independent of the LEA, receiving its revenue budget from the DfES, the City Council has supported it throughout. Independent consultants, CEA, were appointed as project managers in 2002.

If the Academy's establishment owed much to idealism, it was, in some respects, anything but pragmatic. Indeed, one of its greatest challenges was to persuade initially sceptical civil servants that Liverpool, with a declining school population, surplus places and arguably too many secondary schools needed a new one to be established. There were also concerns by the LEA about the possible effect it might have on neighbouring schools, and a significant part of the bid documentation was given to addressing these points (ibid, pp. 7-13). It was argued that, when set against a net planned

reduction of 1,595 secondary places in the city, the Academy, with the closure of Our Lady's would in net terms mean only 328 new places being created, having little impact on the LEA's strategy (Diocese of Liverpool, 2002e). The argument was accepted, although this may have been because the Schools Minister was persuaded by other arguments in the Academy's favour.

Amongst these, the proposed admission arrangements for pupils were seen to provide places for all secondary pupils in a single school serving a previously divided community (ibid, Annex 2). The main priorities for admission in the event of the Academy being over-subscribed were for 50% of the places to go to baptized Catholic pupils living in the local parishes, with the remaining 50% Anglican places made available to other local children, regardless of their religious background, thereby honouring the Bishop's undertaking to the local community and reflecting national Anglican policy after the Dearing Report. The highest priority for any places remaining would be for children from a faith background living outside the area.

The declared aim of the Academy is to provide a strong Christian ethos with its Environmental specialism "underpinning all areas of curriculum, providing a broad range of opportunities over an extended day and delivering an effective personalised learning system" (SFA Academy, 2004, p. 2). The place of Religious Education in the curriculum has been a matter of particular importance, with a working group involving advisers from both

dioceses and the Academy's designated RE staff, in producing a syllabus based, in the absence of an Anglican model, on the Catholic RE framework for Key Stage 3 and a GCSE short course for Key Stage 4 (SFA Academy, 2005b). It was made clear in the bid documentation that:

"The Academy is conducted in accordance with teachings, rites and practises of the Church of England and Roman Catholic church, celebrating their common purpose, as contained in its Trust Deed. It reflects broad churchmanship, tolerance of other faiths and compassion. ... in addition to the place of RE as a distinct curriculum area, it will be an inherently cross curricular theme ... " (Archdiocese of Liverpool and Diocese of Liverpool, 2002, Annex 8).

The proposals also stressed the importance of a daily act of collective worship to be:

"Approached creatively, and inclusively to offer opportunities for giving praise and honour to God in a variety of groups and ways. The Academy also aims to provide voluntary Eucharistic worship in the Anglican and Catholic traditions in the Prayer Centre/Quiet Room and local churches. ... a Faith Centre will be provided in the Academy for use by any students/staff regardless of their faith background. This will be an environment for reflection, celebration and learning" (ibid).

Whilst a considerable number of additional staffing posts have been created, the core of its staffing in 2005 will have transferred from Our Lady's High School including one of the Vice Principals. The Principal and two other Vice Principals have been appointed from national advertisements and this senior management team reflects the joint Anglican/Catholic character of the Academy in their own backgrounds.

Trustees of the Academy are appointed jointly by the Archdiocese and Diocese and the Governing Body, as in aided schools, has a majority appointed by the two dioceses to reflect their interests and, in some cases, environmental expertise.

The initial success of the project may be judged from the fact that all of its 180 Year 7 places for 2005 have been filled even before it had a building to see (SFA Academy, 2005c, p. 3). A second academy modelled on this one, is currently the subject of a bid in the neighbouring Knowsley LEA by the two dioceses.

It would be misleading, however, to suggest that an ecumenical approach is guaranteed success, as two recent examples testify. In 1997 a proposal to amalgamate St Margaret of Antioch Church of England Primary School, St Bernard's Catholic Primary School and Granby Community Primary School failed, because of opposition from the St Margaret and Granby school communities, despite support from the Diocese; whilst opposition from the Archdiocese, overrode support from the St Bernard's school community (Liverpool City Council, 1997). Secondly, in 1998 when the Archdiocese proposed the closure of All Hallows Secondary School, parents, staff and governors campaigned for it to be amalgamated with neighbouring Speke Community School, but without success, despite the tacit support of the LEA (Archdiocese of Liverpool, 1998, Liverpool City Council 1998).



Too much, however, can be read into these particular events. In the first instance, the amalgamation of three schools, each with a different legal status, in an area with many Muslim children would have been difficult to achieve without support from all the communities involved, which clearly did not exist. In the case of All Hallows, there were sufficient places at the nearby St John Almond Catholic High School to accommodate all of the 225 pupils concerned within the Catholic sector, whilst it is uncertain whether Speke Community School would have supported an amalgamation. The policies of both dioceses, that joint schools would only be established in the right circumstances with the complete support of the local community concerned, is relevant in both these cases.

In the three cases where joint schools have been established in Liverpool, all have enjoyed local support. To a considerable extent, all owe their origins to idealism, whether it is entirely the idealism of the ecumenical movement, as in the case of Emmaus School, or the wish of the churches to support local regeneration in greatly disadvantaged inner city areas, as in the other two cases, with the Academy also underpinned by the ideals of Christian environmentalism. In this respect, these schools do not reflect fully the national picture in which most are seen, by Arthur (1995) at least, to be born of pragmatism. The Liverpool joint schools do, however, mirror the national experience insofar as no single model has emerged, emphasising the point that such schools appear to arise each in their own unique circumstances and in no sense reflect a national plan for such

schools by the churches. Such schools do, however, represent a degree of convergence between the churches themselves and their school systems: they simply would not have been possible in the 1960s, anywhere in England, or even more recently in Liverpool with its sectarian history. The fact that three now exist in the city is of great significance.

This chapter has provided a more detailed micro-level analysis of the ways in which policy is implemented at school level, including the ways that schools themselves implement the policies of their churches. This fits within the general identifiable response by church schools nationally and reflect also the traditions of the churches themselves and their purposes in maintaining their school systems. Every local authority and diocese has its own unique characteristics and experience of education systems at this level cannot alone confirm the findings of a national study. It is worth noting, however, that the findings of this case study are broadly consistent with those of earlier chapters on the national situation and that the distinctiveness of Liverpool does not appear to set it apart from the national scene.

PART 4  
CONCLUSIONS

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The aims of this study were, as described in Part 1, to establish the extent to which the distinctive characteristics of the contemporary Church of England and Roman Catholic school systems in England are explained by the traditions and characteristics of the two churches themselves and the extent to which the differences between the two systems may be reducing as the churches adapt to an increasingly secular society and the requirements of the modern state. This chapter will demonstrate in conclusion how far these aims have been achieved and will summarise other significant findings that have emerged from this study. In order to achieve this, most of these findings will be described under the four main research questions to which they relate, which were stated in Chapter 1 (pp. 6-8) of the thesis.

The only findings not to be described under the heading of one of the research questions are those relating to the complexity of the subject. These have emerged independently of any research question and represent both a methodological problem that had to be resolved in the thesis, in order to properly address the research questions, and research findings on the nature of policy which are in their own right an important outcome of the study. Because the issue of complexity operates at both these levels, it

is addressed first in this chapter.

### Complexity

The complexity of this subject has been demonstrated clearly throughout this study in the relationships between various factors, and frequently between the intention of policy makers and the implementation of policy, with sometimes unanticipated outcomes. This confirms the views of Ball (1994) and others about the chaotic and often unpredictable nature of policy as it develops. This was highlighted as an issue in Chapter 2 on research methodology, but the extent of the complexity encountered was greater than initially anticipated.

A number of examples serve to illustrate the complexity of this study which included analysis of the relationships and interaction between many different groups at different levels. These include, at the highest level, the interaction between the national Anglican and Catholic authorities, jointly and separately, and government through its ministers and civil servants, for example in the period prior to the 2002 Education Act or over the issue of financial support for church schools under Building Schools for the Future. Similarly, the relationship between the national church authorities and diocesan authorities, for example in the policy directives to Catholic dioceses by the Catholic Bishops' Conference, is an important element in policy production for Catholic schools, such as those on the appointment of staff and admission of pupils. The national authorities for each church also

interact with their schools through, for example, advice given by the Catholic Education Service and the National Society, to Catholic and Anglican schools respectively, on matters such as school governance and Religious Education. Likewise, the diocesan authorities for each church interact with their schools, as shown many times in this thesis, on issues ranging from bidding for capital projects to the appointment of headteachers, often implementing national policy, but frequently also working within local policy. Diocesan authorities also work with local education authorities within a clearly defined statutory framework, on issues such as school reorganisations and support for schools in difficulties with Ofsted. Church schools themselves interact with their local parishes on a range of issues, for example the appointment of Foundation Governors by Anglican parishes, to the use of a church building for school worship, often led by local clergy.

This is not an inclusive list of examples. Nor would it be correct to think of interaction between different players normally being as simple as suggested here. These are not usually discrete relationships and it would be rare to find examples of any of the above happening in isolation. An illustration of this would be the process of a voluntary aided church school bidding for a capital project; typically this would involve interaction between the school governors and diocesan authority for initial approval and processing of the bid, between the diocesan authority and LEA for prioritising the bid, between the diocese/LEA and DfES to secure 90% funding, between the school governors and parish to secure the 10% church contribution to

funding, and between the school governors (probably with diocesan officers' assistance) and architects, consultants and builders to complete the job. Such a project would be in the context of education law and DfES regulations governing the legal framework for capital works in church schools, government spending parameters and diocesan policy, the 'policy texts' in this example (Ball, 1994). Even the apparently simple instances of interaction between a church school and its parish over, for example, the appointment of parish 'foundation governors' or pupils attending a school act of worship in church, relate to 'policy text' in a broader context - legislation concerning school governance in the first case, national and diocesan church policy/guidance in the second.

Examples like these of interaction between individual groups and organisations are to be seen continually in operation in every church school and at every organisation level throughout the Anglican and Catholic school systems, complicated further by different interpretation and misunderstanding of policy texts. The cumulative effects of this are 'policy as discourse'. In this study, as in all policy studies

"... the *complexity* and scope of policy analysis - from an interest in the workings of the state to a concern within the contexts of practice and the distributional outcomes of policy - precludes the possibility of successful single theory explanations ... the challenge is to relate together analytically the ad hocery of the macro with the ad hocery of the micro without losing sight of the systematic bases and effects of ad hoc social actions: to look for the interactions embedded with chaos." (Ball, 1994, pp. 14-15).

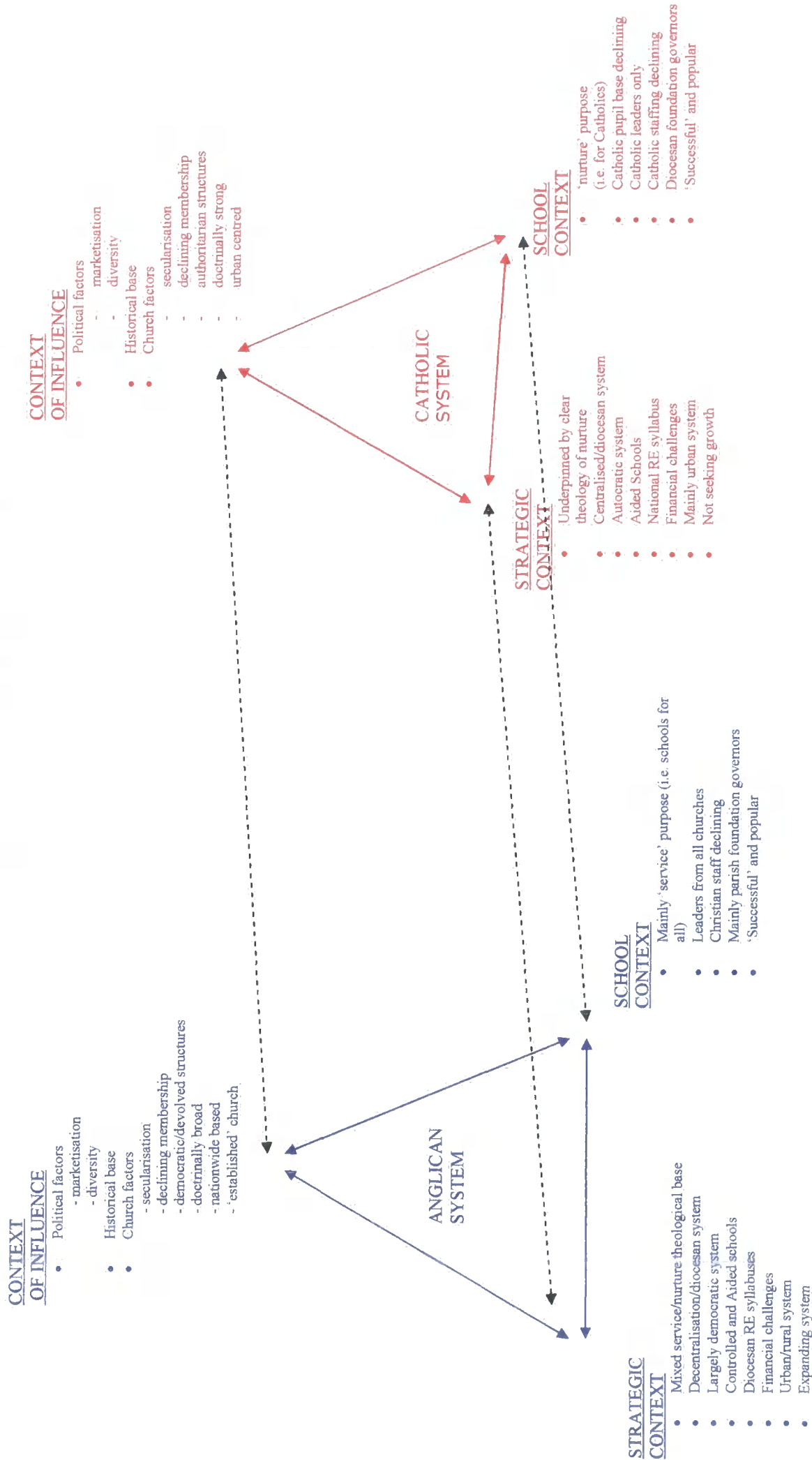
In order to deal with this complexity, whilst addressing the research

questions, a three dimensional conceptual model was developed for this study, based primarily upon the framework developed by Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) to illustrate their Contexts of Policy Making, but also using a system of classifications developed in the field of comparative education by Robinsohn (1992) to ensure that the issues compared were comparable. The conceptual model developed for this study was described in Chapter 2 where it was illustrated in Figure 2. The application of this model is illustrated here in Figure 3, which shows the key points of comparison between the Anglican and Catholic school systems and the relationship between these points when each is grouped in either the Context of Influence, Strategic Context or School Context. Many of the points listed for the Anglican system are the same as for the Catholic system, for example the political factors under the context of Influence heading for each. Other points, however, demonstrate the differences identified between the two systems, for example, the first two points under the Strategic Context headings for each system show them to be a decentralised/diocesan, largely democratic Anglican system compared to a centralised/diocesan, autocratic



**FIGURE 3**

**ENGLISH CHURCH SCHOOL SYSTEMS:  
COMPARATIVE CONTEXTS ILLUSTRATED**



Catholic system.

Figure 3 includes the main points identified in this study, which have been fully explained with the links between them in the main body of the thesis. Thus, the study has demonstrated the relationship between the church schools systems, at the strategic and school level, and a significant number of external influences. In particular, the impact of history, central and local government, the relationship between the two churches themselves and the impact of wider society have all been shown as key influences on both systems. Added to these, a further dynamic has been shown to be at work - the impact of change. Even though this is a study of a contemporary subject, the impact of change is everywhere. The religious, political, social and educational context have not remained static, even in the limited 'contemporary period', for example the changing relationship between the two churches themselves, and the effect of ongoing change in all these areas has been demonstrated clearly. Examined through this framework, what evidence is provided to answer the key questions of this study?

## Findings arising from the Research Questions

1. To what extent do the distinctive characteristics of the Church of England and Roman Catholic school systems in England reflect the traditions and characteristics of the two churches?

This study has demonstrated clearly that, despite many obvious similarities between the Anglican and Catholic school systems and between the churches themselves, there are also a number of distinctive characteristics of each church which are, indeed, reflected in their school systems. The evidence of this is readily identifiable in the research on the current national situation and has been illustrated in some detail through the case study of Liverpool schools. These major characteristics and the relationship between them can be summarised as follows, in the most general of terms and at the risk of stereotyping.

For the Church of England these include its position as the national "Established" church, which views an important part of its mission as being one of service to society in general, with which it could be seen to share broadly the same beliefs and values until at least the 1950s. It is a church which,

especially since 1811, has reflected this aspect of its 'mission to the nation' in its widespread provision of schooling for Anglican and non-Anglican children alike. Strongest in terms of membership in rural and middle class urban areas, its schools are more in evidence there than in more concentrated areas of social disadvantage. As a doctrinally broad, pluralistic church, it is less concerned than its Catholic counterpart to teach through its schools a particular doctrine, and more inclined in consequence of this, and the historical assumption of shared beliefs and values, to accept both non-denominational provision for its own children in county/community schools and a more limited formal church involvement in voluntary controlled Anglican schools. Probably for these reasons, it is a church whose schools are predominantly in the primary phase, having been lukewarm in its involvement with secondary education after the 1944 Education Act, with 18.2% of all primary pupils attending Anglican schools compared with just 4.92% of all secondary pupils (DfES, 2002b). It is also a church with a strong tradition of lay participation and local independence, reflected in its structures of government, locally and nationally, including those for education, and in the ownership of most of its schools by local trustees rather than diocesan authorities.

In comparison, the major features of the Roman Catholic Church and its school system may be summarised as follows. In England, this has been the church of an historically separate, distinctive community, until recently regarded as a

'fortress church' defending its people against outside influences, which since the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century placed great emphasis on providing schools to nurture Catholic children in the Catholic faith and to maintain it in successive generations. Traditionally, it has been a church which is strongest in the major conurbations in terms of membership, with this geographical concentration easing its task of providing schools for all Catholic children. The Catholic Church has traditionally maintained a strong and distinctive doctrine which, although subject as an institution to many changes since the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, with dogmatic Church teaching having less impact on its schools than previously, nevertheless remains largely unwilling to see its children educated in schools outside its full control. For these reasons, it made extraordinary efforts in the post-1944 period to match its primary school provision with the same level of secondary school provision - catering for 9.55% of all English primary pupils and 9.66% of all English secondary pupils in 2002 (ibid). The Catholic Church remains a hierarchical organisation, whose schools are to a very considerable extent under the direct control of their diocesan bishop and the diocesan trustees whom he appoints, except in the case of schools owned by religious orders.

These summaries of the relationships between the Anglican and Catholic churches and their school systems reflect findings which have been described and analysed in detail throughout this study, based upon the work of many writers, particularly on the churches by Hornsby-Smith (1981), Furlong (2000),

Avis (2001), and O'Collins and Faruggia (2004), and on schools by Arthur (1992, 1993, 1995), McLaughlin, O'Keefe and O'Keefe (1996), Chadwick (1994, 1997), Grace (1993, 2002) and Kay, Francis and Watson (2003).

The above is, of course, only an overview of systems and relationships that are infinitely more complex, reflecting the true nature of policy making, implementation and outcomes for such large organisations. Beneath what might be called 'headline' characteristics described above, we find the churches engaged with their 6,787 schools (DfES, op. cit.) to implement policies on school governance, staffing appointments and training, pupil admissions, capital investment, Religious Education, collective worship and school ethos. In each of these areas, this study has demonstrated clear links between established practise within the school systems and the traditions and characteristics of the two churches.

The traditional views of the two churches on their role in national life may be seen reflected in their policies on pupil admissions and school staffing, at both the level of policy text production and, despite significant variations within each system, at the level of implementation and outcome. Thus, the Church of England's position as the national church, with its view of serving society as a whole, is reflected in the strong encouragement to its schools to pursue primarily 'inclusive' admission arrangements. This policy was stated clearly in the 1970 Durham Report, the 1984 Waddington Report and, whilst

acknowledging the validity of 'nurture' as a reason for maintaining church schools, the importance of inclusive admission arrangements was strongly stated in the 2001 Dearing Report.

In all these examples of national Anglican policy statements, repeated at the local level by, for example, the policy statement on the Liverpool Diocesan Board of Education, the desire of the Church to serve the wider community and interact with it clearly underpins these important policy texts. As noted, there is strong evidence that at primary level this policy is applied in the great majority of cases, pupils being admitted to Anglican schools regardless of their individual faith background, this even being true in practice for those primary schools whose admission policy give highest priority to Anglican children, as illustrated by the evidence from the case study. Whilst the situation is different at secondary level, where a significant proportion of well established Anglican schools admit mostly pupils from Anglican or other Christian backgrounds, the debate on this has been very public and sometimes acrimonious whilst the arrangements for new-post Dearing schools such as the St Francis of Assisi Academy in Liverpool have followed the 'service' model.

In contrast, the Catholic Church has, until very recently, concerned itself with the maintenance of the Catholic community alone, a minority community within England which has traditionally regarded itself as being under siege from a majority Protestant population. Its schools where established for Catholic

children only and their admissions policies have always reflected this, giving priority to baptized Catholic children and, until 2002, usually limiting the number of non-Catholic children that could be admitted. It is interesting to note that the test of a child's Catholicity is baptism and only in a minority of cases, as demonstrated by the case study of Liverpool schools, does the child's active involvement in Church give preference for admission to a Catholic school. Whilst there is no evidence that the implementation of Catholic policy on admissions is at variance with national and diocesan policy, as illustrated in the case study, there is clear evidence here that the outcome in terms of the percentage of Catholic children in Catholic schools can vary significantly, in a way that Arthur (1995, p. 213), for example, sees as undermining the Catholicity of many schools.

Arguably, the same characteristics of the two churches are reflected in policy on staffing their schools, especially at senior levels. It has been shown that Anglican schools frequently make no distinction between a candidate being an Anglican or a member of another mainstream Christian church, even for headteacher posts, and in the case of voluntary controlled schools the Church can require no religious affiliation for its staff. Whilst Anglican policy in this area may reflect a degree of pragmatism, it probably also reflects the Church's role at the centre of national religious life and a willingness, at least in the post-Second World War period, to regard other churches as partners in mission. In comparison, the significance of the domestic role of Catholic schools in



sustaining the English Catholic community explains clearly the Catholic Church's requirement that as many as possible of the teachers in its schools, and all of those in a leadership position, should be Catholic. Evidence from the case study of Liverpool schools illustrates how, for senior posts at least, the policy of both churches is implemented fully.

In the same way, these characteristics of the two churches are reflected in their approach to the provision of school places and school reorganisations. Here the views of the Audit Commission (DfES, 2005) are illustrated by the evidence of the Liverpool case study that the Catholic authorities tend to view their schools as a system in its own right, within the LEA structure, compared to the position of Anglican authorities which see their schools functioning alongside community schools as part of a general provision. Thus, it seems that usual practise, again illustrated in the case study, is for Catholic authorities to take the lead in issues of school reorganisation concerning their schools, with such matters for Anglican schools usually dealt with alongside community school reorganisation with LEA officers taking the lead.

The second major area of difference between the two churches, their respective doctrines, clearly impacts on the distinctive characteristics of Anglican and Catholic schools through the Religious Education, collective worship and ethos that they are expected to provide. Here it is not simply that each church has its own doctrine that differs on certain key points from the

other, but also the significance that each attaches to this through these activities and the development of school ethos. The Catholic Church is clear, as has been demonstrated, about the aims and character of the experience in these areas that it intends pupils in its schools to receive. These are explicitly linked in various policy statements to the declared purpose of Catholic schooling, in general terms to produce rounded Christians, but specifically Christians who live within the Catholic Church and according to its teachings. The importance of this should permeate all aspects of Catholic schooling, and it is underpinned by nationally produced syllabuses for primary and secondary Religious Education. This reflects clearly the view that:

"Roman Catholic understanding of what a Catholic school ... exists to do and to be are intimately bound up with the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Church as a body, entrusted by God with a dogmatic, coherently articulated faith to be proclaimed and defended, and in principle and practice independent of secular society" (Chadwick, 1994, p. 9).

In contrast, whilst the Dearing Report and other Anglican publications in recent years speak of the need for Anglican schools to be distinctively Anglican, it is unclear what this means in terms of doctrine, as opposed to general Christian teaching and the values which stem from this. Whilst, as noted, national guidance on Religious Education is promised from the Church of England, in the wake of the national non-statutory Framework for Religious Education in 2004, there is no national Anglican syllabus in existence or planned. Indeed, many Anglican dioceses do not have their own diocesan RE syllabus, advising instead that their schools use the local Agreed Syllabus for the LEA. There is much

evidence here to support the view that Anglican schools do not have:

"a mission that aims to convert and to gather into a well-walled sheepfold, but one that somehow assumes a common interest between national education and the national church where every English citizen has the right to worship" (ibid).

Whilst there may be many reasons for this situation, significant amongst them must be the lack of any doctrine that is understood clearly by the majority of Anglicans. There is no doubt that Anglican doctrine does exist (Williams, 2004), but the range of traditions within the Church of England makes it difficult for its schools to go beyond the central teachings of Christianity to include, for example, an agreed understanding of the significance of the Virgin Mary. This is no criticism of a church which has traditionally seen its strength in the broad range of Christian positions it is able to encompass, but it is clearly a significant point of difference from the position of the Catholic Church which is reflected in the schools that both churches maintain.

A third area of difference between the two churches, the nature of authority within each, has been shown clearly in this study to underpin other differences between the two school systems. It has been shown in particular how both the Catholic practice of vesting authority in each diocesan bishop and more democratic Anglican practises are reflected particularly in the formal policy making processes for education and in issues of school governance. For example, all Catholic foundation governors are, unlike most of their Anglican

counterparts, directly appointed by their bishop or religious order to whom they are answerable. It is also demonstrated in the degree of diocesan involvement in the capital financing process, well illustrated by the case study of Liverpool, where the role of the Archdiocese in raising a levy from parents and parishes is in marked contrast to the Anglican approach which usually relies on schools and parishes themselves to raise the appropriate capital contribution. Whilst most Anglican dioceses do still subsidise major capital projects and some co-ordinate the pooling of resources from their schools, the idea of a centrally controlled levy is uniquely Catholic and it is difficult to envisage an Anglican diocese having the authority to support its schools financially in this way.

Beyond these specific policy areas, despite the view of Arthur (1995) that inconsistency between dioceses is widespread, it is clear that the autonomy of each Catholic diocese has not prevented a standard approach being adopted across most key policy areas in a large number of dioceses, to reflect the lead given by the Catholic Bishops' Conference and the guidance of the Catholic Education Service. In contrast, Anglican policy is far less directed by national bodies, even in key areas such as Religious Education, and the autonomy of each Diocesan Board of Education is reflected in the differences between them. The focus on issues of authority has contrasted the different policy making roles of the churches at national and diocesan levels, where again key findings in the earlier part of the study have been illustrated by evidence from

the Liverpool case study.

2. How far have the distinctiveness and apparent strength of the two school systems been affected by secularisation and other social changes during the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century?

It is a paradox that church schools have experienced a growth in popularity and apparent strength at a time when English society is becoming increasingly secular and institutional religion has experienced a major decline.

This popularity, illustrated clearly by the analysis of DfES statistics in this study and undoubtedly a major strength of church schools, cannot be explained satisfactorily in terms of a form of ghettoisation in which the remaining active Christians bolster a comparatively small number of church schools. Church schools are a large part of the maintained schools system in England and an increasing number of pupils in Anglican and Catholic schools have no active faith background or belong to a different faith - this has always been the case with Anglican schools and is increasingly so in the Catholic sector, as this study has explained.

Nor is this a case of demand exceeding provision, keeping church schools full at a time when pupil numbers elsewhere are falling, although this may be a factor affecting the small number of Anglican secondary schools. On the contrary, as

Table 3 in Chapter 5 demonstrates, pupil numbers are falling in church schools as well as community schools, but are falling at a slower rate than in community schools, thereby increasing the 'market share' of the church school sector. As the case study has demonstrated, this trend is apparent even in Liverpool, where almost half the places available are in church schools. On the evidence available, therefore, it seems clear that the church school systems have retained, in some sense, a stronger base than other schools in a period of declining school populations, regardless of the secularisation of society.

It seems most unlikely either that this popularity can be attributed directly to government education policy, although it is certainly true that the marketization of education since the 1980s has enabled popularity to be expressed through parental choice, whilst school performance tables have publicised, and possibly exaggerated, the success of church schools. However, whilst the academic success of many church schools is clearly a major factor for some parents' choice of school for their children, it is by no means the only factor and for some parents not even a major one (Chadwick, 1994, p. 19). Government policy may create the conditions in which the comparative popularity of schools can be given expression, but it cannot of itself create that popularity.

Nor does the popularity of church schools reflect directly on any renewed efforts by the churches themselves to increase the popularity of their schools

with parents. The efforts of the Church of England since the late 1990s, exemplified by the Dearing Report (2001) and the expansion of its system following that, whilst important for the future, was a reaction to the growth in popularity rather than a cause of it. At the same time the current debate within the Catholic Church on the nature of Catholic education reflects an uncertainty that is unlikely to attract new parents whilst, as noted in Chapter 4, there are no plans to expand the Catholic school system. The churches have maintained school systems that are clearly wanted by parents (although, as this study has shown, many Anglicans would have abandoned it in the 1970s), but the Church of England has only recently re-discovered the importance of its schools, whilst the Catholic Church remains ambivalent about the recruitment of non-Catholic pupils for its schools.

It would, therefore, seem that in large part the popularity and apparent strength of church schools in an increasingly secular age reflects for some the importance of their perceived academic success and for many others the perception of "a higher standard of dedication amongst the staff, a higher standard of discipline ... and that indefinable something extra" (ibid) reflected in the ethos that church schools are seen to nurture. Their popularity may also, in part, be explained by the phenomenon that Davie (1994) in particular has identified that low church membership does not necessarily equate with lack of belief in society at large, and it is worth restating the findings of Passmore & Barnard (2001) that almost two-thirds of those people who

supported church schools in the period of debate before the 2002 Education Act, informed opinion pollsters that they did so because of the schools' religious ethos or because they were seen to have the same values/beliefs as them. This should not be surprising, in view of the fact that at least two-third of the population as a whole consistently claim to be Christian when asked by researchers, a situation confirmed by the 2001 Census.

Unfortunately, there is, as has been noted, a comparative lack of evidence about the effectiveness of church schools in terms of their impact on pupils' belief and values, either at the time they attend school or in later life, with which to justify an expansion of the system from a church perspective. Francis (1986), for example, indicates that Church of England schools in a sample from East Anglia actually exercised a small negative influence on pupils' attitudes towards Christianity when compared to non-denominational schools in the same area, taking account of other influences on pupils' attitudes. Lankshear, (2002b) and Francis (2002) suggests that both Anglican and Catholic schools are most effective in terms of impact on the moral values and religious values of pupils who are members of their church, with no additional impact, or possibly even a negative effect, on other pupils. Francis does, however, point to evidence that overall commitment to religious values and moral values was higher in Catholic schools than in secular schools (*ibid.*). The comparative lack of such information makes it difficult for the churches to evaluate with confidence the comparative effectiveness of different approaches available



under the service and nurture models, at a time when such information is needed to inform the debate on future policy. It is possible, on the evidence available, that the effectiveness of church schools reduces significantly as the proportion of 'unchurched' pupils they admit increases. Such research is an important area for development, perhaps within the churches' own higher education institutions, a number of which now have full university status and are seeking to develop a research base.

This study has identified other areas in which social change has challenged church schools. In particular, the way that England has become a multi-cultural society since the Second World War has led to the charge that church schools can be socially divisive and may even have contributed by their very presence, in the Anglican case, to the serious unrest in a number of northern towns and cities during 2001. These issues have been explored in a number of places in this study and reference made to the efforts of individual dioceses and the national churches to counter such charges by action, for example in the Anglican case through the renewed emphasis on inclusive admission arrangements in the Dearing Report (2001) and elsewhere, and through the report of the Catholic Education Service (2003b) which addressed issues of ethnicity, identity and achievement in Catholic schools.

The speed with which the churches have reacted to this issue, however, has been challenged by, for example, O'Keeffe (1992) and Grace (2002), but it is

clear that the reality differs greatly between areas and individual schools and that some critics have confused issues of ethnicity and culture with those of religious identity. Reference has been made in this study to the significant Afro-Caribbean Christian populations in church schools in some English cities, for example the case study has shown that the percentage of pupils with English as an additional language in Liverpool schools is highest in the Anglican sector for both the primary and secondary phases. At the same time, evidence has been quoted of the proportion of children from non-Christian faiths attending inner-city Catholic schools and particularly Anglican schools in communities such as Bradford. There is clear evidence, therefore, that the character of church schools in many areas has been changed by the multicultural nature of modern British society. It is equally clear, except in the case of Anglican secondary schools (although even here there are many notable exceptions), that there is little distinction to be made between church and secular schools in terms of the socio-economic background of their pupils.

Finally, one of the biggest challenges to the future effectiveness of church schools, the supply of Christian teachers, is also a direct consequence of secularisation. The need to encourage Christians to take up teaching as a vocation was proposed as a solution in the Dearing Report (2001) which also identified an important role for the churches' higher education institutions involved in teacher training. Even an effective development of these approaches, however, is unlikely to resolve the problem in view of the number

of teachers required for church schools, which seem likely to have to rely increasingly on teachers who are sympathetic to them without being practicing Christians. There is a clear need already for the churches to support such teachers with appropriate teaching materials and other resources that would underpin the work of a church school across its curriculum, but there is surprisingly little evidence of this happening. Likewise, the need to provide appropriate training and ongoing support for headteachers and other leaders in church schools is increasingly important, as recognised, for example, by Sullivan (2000).

3 How far have the distinctiveness and apparent strength of the two school systems been affected by the requirements placed upon them by the state?

A significant finding of this study is that the strength of the church school system, whilst this might seem considerable, is over stated and masks a number of weaknesses which may, in time, have serious consequences for it if not addressed. This has been demonstrated clearly in the previous section on the effects of secularisation, and has also been a major finding when considering the impact of the state on church schools.

The Anglican and Catholic school systems display signs of considerable strength at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The size of the systems and the popularity of church schools with parents, as illustrated through the analysis of DfES

statistics in this study, their popularity with government and the perceived success of church schools, all contribute to this. Within the Church of England the Dearing Report signalled renewed confidence in the system and the 2002 Education Act confirmed government support. There are, however, a number of significant underlying weaknesses in the two systems, which may come to present more serious threats to its future health than the longstanding opposition of humanists and other opponents, described in Chapter 4, for example, the British Humanist Association (2001, 2002).

The first of these weaknesses is the extent to which church schools are now dependent on government financially, and increasingly under government control in most aspects of their operation. The financial challenges facing both churches have been explained in detail and illustrated by the example of capital funding for Liverpool schools in the case study. Despite reducing the financial responsibility of the churches from 50% of capital funding in the 1950s to 15% and in 2002 to 10%, even this level of support is beyond the capacity of many dioceses in both churches and a significant number of congregations, which are in many cases small and often elderly.

Whilst this clearly reflects the growing institutional weakness of the churches in the face of secularisation, the expectations of government and parents for high quality buildings to meet the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century are now so considerable that major secondary school projects need to be 100% funded by

the government under its Building Schools for the Future project. There is as yet no agreement for primary schools to be funded in this way when the project is extended, but this is likely to be necessary if voluntary aided primary schools are to keep pace in this respect with community and voluntary controlled schools. The willingness of government to agree such levels of support is a notable sign of church schools' popularity, but is also a clear sign of weakness in the church school systems. There are potential dangers in this, as it begs the question about whether future governments, perhaps less sympathetic to church schools, will be willing to fund 100% of their capital investment without reducing the present level of church control over them still further. This is a more likely danger for church schools than any threat of abolition, given that the cost of taking over so large a part of the English school system would be so prohibitive that only the most dogmatic opponents of church schools, if in government, would ever pursue such a course.

Secondly, by giving schools greater independence than previously, under local management arrangements, and by strengthening the powers of governing bodies, government legislation has loosened the control that Catholic authorities in particular had previously experienced over their schools. Alongside this, the introduction of the National Curriculum and the current review of 14-19 provision, including school sixth forms, have clearly affected the control that church schools have over their own curriculum, for example, making it more difficult to sustain the previous time allocation for Religious

Education. Likewise, a number of changes introduced by government have affected the admission arrangements for church schools, most notably the introduction of parental preference in the 1980s and the abolition of Section 91 Regulations in 2002 which between them prevent Catholic schools from restricting the number of non-Catholic admissions if they are under-subscribed. In all of this, it should also be kept in mind that the increased independence of community schools under local management arrangements, the requirement for the same curriculum, except for RE, and the encouragement of all secondary schools to specialise in particular areas, have between them blurred significantly the distinctions that existed previously between the church and secular sectors.

There is no doubt, therefore, that the evidence in response to this third research question points to a reduction in the distinctive characteristics of church schools, although care should be taken not to over emphasise this, especially at a time when the Church of England is encouraging its schools to develop their own Anglican distinctiveness. Much evidence has been provided to illustrate the extent to which the church schools sector has become more integrated within the state system, nationally and at LEA level. The standards agenda of successive governments has led to the inclusion of most aspects of church schools under the Ofsted inspection regime and at LEA level the diocesan authorities for both churches have become involved as never before in a network of committees and other statutory bodies, with the result that in

many places, as illustrated in the Liverpool case study, diocesan education structures have been enhanced to meet the new requirements.

It has also been established in this study, however, that the relationship between church schools and the state has not been all one way. In particular, government action to reduce the level of financial commitment for the governors of voluntary aided schools towards capital projects, to which reference has already been made in this chapter, provides a clear indication of the wish to support church schools at a time when the churches face increasing financial challenges in this area and came, as the evidence has shown, as a result of direct appeals from the churches to government. Likewise, the provisions of the 2002 Education Act increased the powers of Anglican diocesan boards of education and encouraged the expansion of the church schools sector, in response to the Dearing Report's recommendation the previous year that an additional 100 Anglican secondary schools should be created.

In one further area of significant change, resulting from government policy, the growth of a consumer culture in education, it could be argued that the character of church schools has been affected. There is no doubt, despite the reluctance of the Anglican and Catholic authorities and many staff and governors in church schools to accept the culture of the education marketplace, introduced through the policies of successive governments since the 1980s, that church schools are as much part of this as secular schools. It

may, of course, be argued that this is the consequence of social change rather than government policies, but the relationship between the two is ambiguous and there is clear evidence, illustrated here by the Liverpool case study, of the churches themselves adopting market culture through, for example, the establishment of service agreements with their schools.

The final example of how church schools have responded to government educational policies involves their response to the school standards agenda of successive governments since the 1980s. There is no doubt that church schools in general are perceived to be academically successful, as this study has shown with references to, for example the work of Ofsted (2001) and Schagen, Davie, Rudd and Schagen (2002). Nor is there any doubt that the Anglican and Catholic school systems are strengthened by this much publicised apparent success, in terms of their popularity with parents and government. There is, however, a surprising lack of in-depth research on the academic success of church schools, in view of the amount of evidence now available in terms of benchmarking and value added performance. Significant research in this area might provide a more balanced view of the academic success of church schools than that currently provided by government and the churches themselves, which have in the past publicised highly successfully 'raw' performance data which exaggerate the success of church schools, for example, in the Dearing Report (2001, p. 87). Evidence of church schools' broader educational performance is now available in the form of published Ofsted and



denominational inspection reports over more than a decade, but these also have yet to be the subject of any significant research. Such research is clearly necessary to evaluate properly the educational success and underlying strength of church schools.

4. To what extent are the changes identified in this study leading to convergence between the two school systems?

This study has shown there to be clear evidence of convergence between the Anglican and Catholic school systems, partly as a result of ecumenical developments between the churches themselves and partly because of the impact of secularisation and the growing involvement of government.

An underlying theme of this study, addressed in response to the fourth and final major research question, has been the extent to which changes in these school systems and the churches themselves have resulted in convergence between the two systems. Convergence in this sense is defined as movement towards a more central ground from traditional positions that were further apart, but with each system still retaining some of its distinctiveness reflecting the characteristics of its own church. In one sense, such convergence reflects the ecumenical movement in which the different churches have remained distinct whilst recognising and proclaiming that they have far more in common than they have things that divide them, as described by Hastings (1987) and

Furlong (2000). This aspect of convergence is, for example, illustrated by changes in the teaching of Religious Education in Catholic schools from the traditional catechetical approach to the present more open approach. Another dimension to the convergence between these systems reflects a lessening of the difference between, on the one hand a Catholic system which was absolutely clear about its aims and role, being well equipped to achieve these, and on the other hand, an Anglican system which had sometimes given the impression of not knowing what its role was. In order to understand the extent of the convergence that has taken place, it is necessary to compare the position of both systems in 1970 with their position now and to understand that the process of change is still continuing.

In 1970, the Catholic system was very much the product of the post-war developments that had seen huge expansion in the number of schools, especially at secondary level, undertaken at great cost by the church which had paid for half of the building programme required. The system was confident and embedded in strong communities which were still largely to be found at mass on a Sunday. Catholic schools were seen as an integral part of the church, picking up on a Monday morning a week's work begun in church on the Sunday. Catholic schools were clear about their religious base and the doctrine which they taught through a catechetical approach to RE, to nurture and preserve the 'one true faith'. They were staffed largely by practising Catholics and led by headteachers who had a clear understanding of the

religious dimension to their schools and were often themselves priests or members of religious orders. As noted in Chapter 5, this situation is particularly well described by Arthur (1995). Prior to the significant increase in direct government involvement in schools from the 1980s onwards, the Catholic system was, in 1970, a significantly independent part of the state system.

In comparison, the Anglican system in 1970 had experienced very little growth in the post war period, with few new secondary schools and many voluntary controlled schools, compared to the Catholic system in which all schools had voluntary aided status. It was a system that had little confidence and no clear purpose, to the extent that the Durham Report (1970) encouraged a move from aided to controlled status and the ending of denominational Religious Education. Because most Anglican schools served the wider community, it was considered wrong to stress the Christian distinctiveness of such schools, and their staffing and leadership reflected this to some extent at least, although strongly committed Christian headteachers in many places were able to counter this on an individual basis, as described in Chapter 4. Even voluntary aided Anglican schools were often seen as a fully integrated part of state provision.

Between 1970 and the present day a number of significant changes have, generally unintentionally, led to convergence between the two systems, although the ecumenical movement has, knowingly, underpinned this.

Firstly, the Catholic system has seen some of its former confidence replaced by a degree of uncertainty, as illustrated by the debate on the nature of Catholic education involving, for example, Arthur (1995), Sullivan (2001) and Grace (2002). This debate reflects real changes in many parts of the Catholic system, generally arising from the effects of secularisation, although Catholic schools remain central to the Church's mission. In comparison, the Anglican system has gained greatly in confidence, illustrated well by the General Synod's resolution placing church schools at "the centre of the church's mission to the nation" (General Synod, 1998), and the Dearing Report (2001) which followed this. The Dearing Report in particular encouraged expansion in the number of church schools, especially at secondary level, and urged Church of England schools to be distinctively Anglican. This has resulted in, for example, a number of dioceses, including the five dioceses in the north west of England as described in Chapter 6, reviewing their diocesan RE syllabuses and considerable efforts being made by the Church nationally to improve the denominational inspection process. Whilst these efforts have been made to strengthen the distinctive character of Anglican school provision, changes to the Catholic RE provision has, as already noted, moved this away from its previously rigid doctrinal base.

The impact of secularisation on the Catholic system in particular, has had a major impact on the pupil population of church schools. Whereas most

Anglican schools have always served the wider community, many members of which have no church connection, secularisation now means that many Catholic schools now also serve a largely unchurched population. A major point of convergence, therefore, is that Catholic schools now increasingly find themselves in the position common to most Anglican schools, of being the only point of contact between their church and an otherwise disengaged population.

Likewise, the effect of secularisation on staffing and particularly the leadership of church schools has brought the Catholic system closer to the position in which the Anglican system also finds itself. Whilst both systems now suffer from the same reduction in the number of committed Christian teachers, it has been shown that both also suffer from a greatly reduced pool of suitable leadership candidates from which to appoint headteachers and deputy headteachers. Additionally, the quality of the religious leadership of school communities by those Christians who are appointed headteachers, previously a great strength in the Catholic system particularly, has also reduced (Grace, 2002), bringing both systems towards a more common position.

Whilst these changes may be characterised by some in the Catholic church as a regrettable weakening of the traditional position, they are seen by other Catholics, for example Sullivan (2001), as reflecting a move from the old 'fortress Church' to a more legitimate Catholic position of openness and engagement with the wider community. Almost certainly, however, most of

these changes have been inevitable in the Catholic system as it moves towards a more common ground with the Anglican system. Conversely, the changes within the Anglican system, advocated particularly in the Dearing Report (2001), which are aimed at strengthening its previously weak position and emphasising its Christian distinctiveness, have been generally welcomed within the Church of England, as its schools system moves closer to the Catholic position of maintaining distinctively Christian schools, albeit with a Catholic emphasis.

This study has demonstrated clearly that the distinctive characteristics of contemporary Church of England and Roman Catholic school systems in England are explained by the traditions and characteristics of the churches themselves, but that the differences between the two systems are reducing as they and the churches adapt to an increasingly secular society and the requirements of the modern state. This is reflected in the "strengthening of political alliances between the Churches over the important educational legislation of 1988 and 1993" (Chadwick, 1994, p. 208) and subsequently over other legislation. Most symbolic of these changes, however, have been the joint Anglican/Catholic schools which have emerged since the 1970s, the development of which has been analysed in this study: still small in number but impossible to create before the 1970s and a clear sign of emerging common ground. Convergence between the two systems has not been so great that they will cease to function independently of each other, or that these systems will come to share the same

theological rationale in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, with increasingly similar characteristics, aims and challenges to be faced it is difficult to disagree with a view that the differences between Anglican and Catholic schools will continue to reduce to the point where, to the lay observer, there will be little to distinguish one system from the other. The opportunities or both churches to work more closely together that this would present, in terms of Christian mission in a largely secular society, are huge - it remains to be seen if they have the vision to use them.

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